THE

Married Philoſopher:

A

COMEDY.

As acted at the

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

Lincoln's-Inn-Fields.

—— *Ingeminant Curæ, rurſuſque reſurgens*
Sævit Amor. —— VIRG.

By a GENTLEMAN of the *Temple.*

LONDON:

Printed for T. WORRALL, at *Judge Coke's Head*, near the *Temple-Exchange* Coffee-Houſe in *Fleet-Street.* M DCC XXXII.

[Price 1 *s.* 6 *d.*]

To the Right Honourable the

Lady *ROMNEY.*

MADAM,

NO Body is a better Judge of Writing than Lady Romney; wherefore it would be a Preſumption in me to ſay any thing of the Piece I have done myſelf the Honour to inſcribe to Your Ladiſhip, as the only Method allow'd me to ſpeak my Gratitude for unmerited Favours; and it would not be leſs idle to follow the common Path of Dedicators, and enumerate Your Virtues; for none who have

the Honour to know your Ladiſhip can be ignorant of them, and who have not, wou'd take ſuch a Detail to be a ſtudy'd Piece of Adulation, it being as rare to meet with a Lady of your excellent Character, as to find a Poet who abominates Flattery: I ſhall therefore only beg Your Ladiſhip's Protection of this Comedy, and Your Pardon for the preſent Liberty taken by

MADAM,

Your Ladiſhip's

Devoted and Obedient

Humble Servant.

PROLOGUE,

Spoken by Mr. RYAN.

IF a plain Story, plainly told may take,
Where pompous Dreſs is ſhunn'd for Nature's ſake;
Where no ſtrain'd Flights, in Metaphors appear,
No Terms of Art, t' amuſe and ſtrike the Ear;
Where no Endeavour's made at Eloquence,
And all the Aim is ſpeaking common Senſe;
We hope to pleaſe: But if this Art won't do,
And you'll admit of only Sound and Shew,
Why then, i' faith, our hopeful Poet's bit,
Who thought to win you with his Gallick *Wit.*
Howe'er; he bids me ſay he too can climb,
Riſe to the Skies, and treat you in Sublime;
Out-ſoar your Underſtanding and his own,
And even ſcale great Jove's *imperial Throne;*
Can thunder in his Words, make Gods deſcend,
And from the dark Abyſs raiſe every Fiend.
His winged Lightnings terrible ſhall blaze,
And wrap you all in Wonder while you gaze.
If thus departing far from Nature's Laws,
He proves the only Way to gain Applauſe,
The next he writes ſhall be ſo very good,
That not one Sentence ſhall be underſtood.

If

PROLOGUE.

If he has err'd, he promiſes t'amend;
Let that and Novelty the Bard befriend.
Our Scenes to Night the Power of Beauty ſhew,
And, Gentlemen, we don't expoſe the Beau.
Be favourable then, let France *this Night*
Direct our Engliſh *Authors how to write:*
If you applaud, you will reform the Age,
And Senſe and Wit reſume again the Stage.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

MEN.

Sir Harry Sprightly,	Mr. *Ryan.*
Odway,	Mr. *Hulett.*
Old Bellefleur.	Mr. *Quin.*
Young Bellefleur, *the Philoſpher*,	Mr. *Milward.*
Horatio,	Mr. *Walker.*
Bruſh, *Servant to the Philoſpher*,	Mr. *Chapman.*

WOMEN.

Meliſſa, *Wife to the Philoſopher*,	Mrs. *Hallam.*
Violetta, *a Coquet*,	Mrs. *Younger.*
Pinwell, Meliſſa's *Woman.*	Mrs. *Stevens.*

The SCENE,

BELLEFLEUR'S Lodgings.

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Curæ *non ipſa in morte relinquunt.* VIRG.

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THE
Married Philoſopher.

ACT I.

SCENE: *A Hall.*

Enter Bruſh.

Bruſh. I Believe our Family is not to be matched in the three Kingdoms: Here is as much Myſtery as in the Pagan Religion; and, as in that every one ſaw through the Cheat, though none durſt ſpeak, ſo here every one knows our grand Secret, yet none dare open his Lips. My Maſter he is married, and will ſtill be a Batchelor; my Lady is thought a Maid, and is vexed to the Heart ſhe is not allow'd to acquaint the World with her knowing more than it imagines; her Siſter, the very Quinteſſence of Coquetry, is tormented with two different Paſſions, Love and Vanity, and whether Fleſh or Folly will prevail, is a Queſtion would puzzle even a wiſer Man than myſelf. Then there is the Lady of my Affections *Mademoiſelle la Suivante*, who copies her fine Lady ſo exactly, it is not eaſy to diſtinguiſh the Original. But here ſhe comes, and ſeems thoughtful.

Enter Pinwel.

May I preſume to ask what employs your Thoughts, Mrs. *Pinwel?*

Pin. Nothing.

Bru. Juſt as I ſuſpected; for I never knew a Lady of your gay Temper think on any Thing.

Pin. Yes; we ſometimes think of a pert Coxcomb.

Bru. Why, that's thinking of nothing: But was your Ladyſhip diſpoſed to think of ſomething, I ſhould humbly hope my Services might ſometimes employ your Thoughts.

Pin. Pooh! Pr'ythee don't put me out of Humour. I have an Affair of Conſequence to manage, which requires more than the common Skill of a Lady's Woman. I am thinking, *Bruſh*, who is moſt to blame, my Maſter, who has truſted his Secret to his Siſter; or ſhe, who has told it to all her Acquaintance?

Bru. I won't ſay who's wrong; but I'm ſure my wiſe Maſter is not ſo much in the Right. What? truſt a Woman! Before I wou'd have been guilty of ſuch a Folly ——

Pin. Indeed, Mr. *Homeſpun!* But to ſhew your Wiſdom what a Woman can do, know, that I know that all my Lady's Acquaintance know her Marriage; and though three Women in the Houſe know all this, as well as myſelf, we don't let my Maſter know we know any Thing of the Matter.

Bru. If he don't know it, he gueſſes very ſhrewdly. But let us think a little of our own Affairs. I hope, Mrs. *Pinwel*, I have in three Years Time given you ſufficient Proofs of my Affection: Pr'ythee, how long am I to dangle? Come, Do you love me, or do you not? Speak ſincerely.

Pin. That's juſt as the Weather proves.

Bru. As the Weather!

Pin. Ay, as the Weather.—— For Example. In rainy Weather, I am always out of Humour; in cloudy

cloudy Weather I am eaten up with the Vapours; in a clear Day, I am ſo taken up with dreſſing myſelf, and my Lady, that a Declaration of Love would be hideouſly *mal a propos*, and give me a Fit of the Spleen; if it freezes, I ſympathize with the Air, and am very cold and cruel. In ſhort, I am never in a tolerable Humour to hear a Lover, but when it ſnows. The melting of the falling Flakes thaw me into Pity. But I have a Meſſage from my Lady to my Maſter, and can't loſe any more Time; however, I would not have you quite deſpair.

Bru. Why, at this Rate, what Ground have I to hope?

Pin. I'll give you ſome: —— You are not altogether indifferent to me. You muſt know, I hate a puling Lover, abhor a ſententious one, deteſt a forward Admirer, abominate a diſtant Reſpect, can't bear a pert Coxcomb, and could never endure a Mute. A grave Look gives me the Hyp, Gayety ſhews too much Preſumption, Silence a Conſciouſneſs of Defects, your great Talkers are ſelf-conceited, Reaſoning in Love is the ſure Sign of the Want of it, and to prate without Reaſon is Folly with a Witneſs. I deſpiſe the fickle, and hate a Man who is always the ſame. Now I have told you my Humour, 'tis your own Fault if you don't hit it. [*Exit.*

Bru. I would as ſoon undertake to cure a Shopkeeper of Lying, whilſt thou haſt my Lady's Siſter to copy after. But 'tis high Time I ſhould think of my Maſter's Breakfaſt. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *A Study.*

Bellefleur *diſcover'd at a Table, with Books before him.*

Bell. Here I can ſay I taſte the Sweets of Life and Liberty; free from Noiſe and Envy, I here

enjoy uninterrupted Peace. Here, though alone, I am in the moſt agreable Company; all the Sages of Antiquity are my Companions: Without Hazard or Fatigue I travel o'er the Globe, and can cenſure Kings, allow or condemn their Actions. I'm here at Leiſure, tho' conſtantly employ'd; and if from ſeverer Studies I would relax my Mind the Muſes are at Hand to prevent that Moroſeneſs which makes a Pedant. In this Place Princes might envy me. But how different is my State, when I leave my Study! Here I'm a Batchelor; in my Houſe a Husband. A Husband! O Philoſophy! Philoſophy! how poor a Shield art thou oppoſed to Beauty? Yet, why ſhould I complain? I have a Wife, young, beautiful, diſcreet, and whoſe only Happineſs conſiſts in mine. But, after all, I have a Wife: I am then a — Huſband; and muſt own I have not Philoſophy to bear up againſt that terrible Appellation. [*Sits down and reads.*] Cruel Companion! 'Twas thy Eloquence o'ercame my Reaſon. The gay Deſcription thou haſt given, the tender Scenes thou haſt expoſed to View, that Calm of Life, and thoſe ſucceſſive Joys thou haſt beautifully ſet forth, firſt fir'd my Imagination, and made me wiſh my Loſs. 'Twas thou who gaveſt me Eyes to ſee *Meliſſa*'s Charms, and ſeeing I was undone. —— I lov'd, was lov'd, and —— married.

[Horatio *enters, and ſtands unperceived at the Back of his Chair.*]

Hor. A notable Subject of Complaint this!

Bell. Horatio! I thought I had been alone.

Hor. What's the Matter?

Bell. Can you ask me ſuch a Queſtion? Am I not a Husband?

Hor. You are married.

Bell. Well, I am married; and need you, after ſaying that, ask the Reaſon of my Complaint? I

ſhould

ſhould have kept my Uneaſineſs to myſelf; but ſince you have ſurpriz'd me, I ſhall for the future be leſs on the Reſerve.

Hor. What mean you? I can't ſuſpect *Meliſſa*'s Virtue or Prudence. If on any other Account you have Ground for Diſpleaſure, you are Maſter of your Family, why don't you redreſs what you don't like?

Bell. To ſuſpect *Meliſſa* were little leſs than Blaſphemy. No; ſhe is chaſte as ſhe is fair. But ——

Hor. But what?

Bell. O *Horatio*, Matrimony is a Yoke!

Hor. To the Ladies, I grant it is.

Bell. Well you will one Day think as I do. I hope I ſhall ſee you married in your Turn, and then you will acknowledge, that the Man who paſſionately loves his Wife, and would preſerve reciprocal Affection, muſt give up his Pretenſions to Reaſon, and have no Will but hers.

Hor. This can never be the Caſe, where a Wife, like *Meliſſa*, is both tender and prudent.

Bell. I allow all the fine Things you can ſay of *Meliſſa*, yet let me tell you, ſhe has not quite Complaiſance enough to thwart her own Inclinations for my Eaſe.

Hor. Be particular; What do you accuſe her of?

Bell. She knows how much I apprehend our Marriage ſhould be known. Yet ſeems by her Behaviour to take a ſecret Pleaſure in giving every one room to gueſs we are Man and Wife. She makes almoſt every Day ſome new Acquaintance, and as they are all Women, may, for ought I know, be as many new Confidants. Now don't you think our Marriage is likely to be long concealed.

Hor. It muſt one Day be known: Can you hope it will be always concealed?

Bell. Would to Heaven it cou'd!

Hor. And why ſo?

Bell. In the firſt Place, I apprehend my Father's Reſentment; in the next, I have been extremely

ill-natured on the Subject; and in my Writings have unluckily rail'd at a married State, with the bittereſt Satyr my Wit could furniſh me. And when it is once known that I am dignify'd with the Title of Husband, I muſt conſequently expect, in return, to ſee all the little Wits of the Age fall upon me. This Apprehenſion, ridiculous as it may appear to you, has, I muſt own, its Weight with me.

Hor. Your Lady has a much better Reaſon for keeping your Marriage ſecret, which is, the Probability of your Uncle's diſinheriting you. He is as rough and whimſical, as he is rich and poſitive. He might reſent your not having asked his Conſent.

Bell. And yet even this Reaſon is, I fear, too weak to make a Woman hold her Tongue. But I not only apprehend *Meliſſa*, her ſweet Siſter *Violetta*, who will one Day make you the Object of univerſal Envy, is alſo in the Secret. That Girl makes me hourly tremble: She's a leading Coquette, and never three Minutes the ſame. She fills my Houſe with a Pack of Weather-Glaſſes like herſelf, and the Minute I enter *Meliſſa*'s Apartment, where this malicious Coquette has fixed the Rendezvous, all the Company are ſtruck mute. In a Moment every Eye is turned upon me, a general Whiſper goes round. In ſhort, by the myſterious Nods and Smiles of this diſcreet Aſſembly, I have all the Reaſon in the World to believe my good-natured Siſter has let every Gigler of it into my Secret.

Hor. I can't juſtify her Conduct. But Philoſophy will arm you with Patience.

Bell. I hope then, Sir, you are laying in a good Stock of this uſeful Philoſophy. If I know *Violetta* you will have Occaſion for more than a little.

Hor. I am not blind to her Foibles; but flatter myſelf her good Senſe will one Day get the better of her little Vanities.

Bell. If you have that Opinion of *Violetta*, what is it delays your Happineſs?

Hor.

Hor. This unhappy Duel, which obliges me to conceal my Name; for whenever I could procure a ſerious Minute, her only Objection was, the not knowing my Family. But I'll to your Lady and *Violetta*, and deſire them to be more reſerved, ſince I find your Eaſe depends ſo much upon it. [*Exit.*

[*Enter* Pinwel, *looks upon* Bellefleur, *who is returned to his Books.*

Pin. Ever Reading! Well, Heaven preſerve me from a ſtudious Husband. — Sir, Sir, your Lady. —

Bell. 'Sdeath, can't you ſpeak a little louder, Child?

Pin. Sir, your Lady —— [*Raiſing her Voice.*]

Bell. Harkye, Child, how often have I told you I would not hear that Word in this Houſe?

Pin. Laud, Sir, where's the Harm in ſaying your Lady?

Bell. Again! —— Firſt, Mrs. *Pert*, you diſobey my Orders.

Pin. Laud, I can't find what Harm there is in giving her that Title, ſhe has ſo much Right to.

Bell. Patience, good Heaven! *Pinwel.*

Pin. Sir!

Bel. When I am ſpeaking, I think it would be but good Manners to afford me your Attention.

Pin. Laud, Sir, there would be no End of hearing and practiſing all the fine Things you tell us. You are a Philoſopher, Sir; but I could almoſt wiſh your poor Lady ——

Bell. Mention that Name but once again. —— Will you favour me with a Word or two?

Pin. With half a Dozen, Sir, —— But your Lady waits my Return.

Bell. I am afraid all my Philoſophy will be too little to bear up againſt this provoking Wench. [*aſide.*] You know that what you are entruſted with is ——

Pin. Laud, Sir, I have been burſting with it theſe two Years, and can't keep it in any longer. — You expect Impoſſibilities; and if you don't ſuffer me to vent myſelf, it riſes in my Throat ſo, it may choak me for aught I know in my Sleep.

Bell.

Bell. I preſume you are trying my Patience.

Pin. Why, Sir, you have no Conſcience to impoſe Silence on a Woman for two long Years; and after that to deſire ſhe'll hold her Tongue the Lord knows how long longer. For my Part, I had rather be in a Monaſtery, where I muſt watch, faſt, and pray, ſo I had but the Liberty of talking, than to be bound to ſuch unreaſonable Terms. Sir, I can't bear it, and no Wages can make me amends.

Bell. I don't deſire thee to be ſilent. Pr'ythee talk till thou haſt exhauſted all thy Moiſture, hold thy Tongue but on one ſingle Subject.

Pin. I underſtand you, Sir, you mean your Marriage. Why, Sir, that's the very forbidden Fruit. I ſhould never forgive myſelf to hear another had talk'd of it before me, when I was a Witneſs to — I *Henry* take thee *Meliſſa* for my wedded Wife, to have and to hold ——

Bell. Would thou could'ſt hold that eternal Clack.

Pin. We Ladies Women, Sir, are juſt the Reverſe of your Lawyers; you know, they never ſpeak without a Fee, and we never hold our Tongues without Money.

Bell. Will that buy my Peace?

Pin. Laud, Sir, we are a Sort of firſt Miniſters; and tho' you Philoſophers deſpiſe the ſhining Dirt, we find it of vaſt uſe in all our Negociations.

Bell. Pr'ythee let this then buy thy Silence. [*gives Money.*

Pin. I'm as mute as a Fiſh, and ſhould the Itch of babling ſeize me, at any Time hereafter, you carry a Specifick in your Purſe. But to the Purpoſe, Sir,— Your Lady,— I beg ten thouſand Pardons, Sir, I mean, my Lady, ſent me to inform you, that ſhe has ſomething of Importance to ſay to you and deſigns to wait upon you here.

Bell. She knows I dedicate theſe Hours to my Study, and ſuffer an Interruption with Uneaſineſs. Tell her, I ſhall receive her Commands in her own Apartment, half an Hour hence.

Pin.

Pin. Sir, I am all Obedience. *Exit.*]

Bell. If Gold had but the ſame Power over *Violetta*, and could bridle the Tongue of a Coquette, my Gratitude wou'd make me eſteem it as the Author of my Quiet. [*ſits, and riſes.*] The Impertinence of this Wench has confus'd my Mind. Books, which were my Refuge againſt every other Care, are become uſeleſs. Thus Matrimony has made the Paſſage free to all the Ills of Life, which, in my Days of Liberty, durſt not intrude upon my Studies. —— But —— it's my own Fault: Reaſon offer'd her Advice in vain; Beauty had ſtopp'd my Ears to Admonition; and I ſuffer the juſt Puniſhment of a headſtrong Folly.

Enter Meliſſa.

Meliſſa! What brings you hither?

Mel. Am I grown frightful, Sir, that you ſtart at the Sight of me!

Bell. You might have ſpar'd the unkind Queſtion, ſince I am ſure you are convinc'd, that Time has rather encreas'd than diminiſh'd my Affection. But I was ſurpriz'd to ſee you here, having juſt now ſent Word I wou'd wait upon you.

Mel. I met *Pinwel*; but was impatient to talk with you upon an Affair of Conſequence.

Bell. Well, you are impatient to talk. You muſt have your Way.

Mel. If I am uneaſy while from you, can you be diſpleas'd. 'Tis a Mark both of my Affection and Duty, to deſire to be always near you.

Bell. I ſhould be glad you could think a little Complaiſance to a Husband was Part of the Duty of a Wife.

Mel. You may as well ſpeak out, and ſay Obedience.

Bell. Do not tax me unjuſtly. You know I never yet contradicted you, or requir'd any Thing contrary to your Inclinations, except the concealing our Marriage. And I find you have too little Regard for my

my Eaſe, to grant me ſo ſmall a Favour. Should any of my Acquaintance find you here, what would they conjecture?

Mel. Why, they might think —— but, in ſhort, let 'em think what they will, where's the mighty Conſequence!

Bell. Heavens! is it poſſible you can take a Pleaſure in tormenting me! The Conſequence would be my Father's Diſpleaſure, and my Uncle's diſinheriting me. I apprehend the latter for your Sake, not my own. And theſe, you know, are the Motives which have made me endeavour to prevent even the leaſt Suſpicion of our Marriage.

Mel. You aim at what is impoſſible.

Bell. I do indeed, if you are reſolv'd to declare it.

Mel. I reſolve to do whatever you command me. But the World is inquiſitive, and ——

Bell. It won't be long a Secret.

Mel. I ſhould be overjoy'd it was no longer ſo.

Bell. I believe you.

Mel. You are angry with me.

Bell. No: I am angry with my ſelf for believing you prudent, and a Woman of your Word. Did you not promiſe that none but your Siſter and your Woman ſhould be entruſted with our Marriage?

Mel. I did.

Bell. And have you kept your Promiſe?

Mel. Don't tax me with the Indiſcretion of others. I have been juſt to my Word.

Bell. And no doubt are ſorry for it.

Mel. I own I am: For it has expos'd me to the common Cenſure of the World; and our living under the ſame Roof ſo long, makes my Reputation ſuffer with thoſe, whoſe good Opinion I would forfeit on no other Score than that of pleaſing you. It's true, my Innocence makes me deſpiſe Calumny; but I think I may juſtly claim ſome Return for ſuch Obedience.

Bell.

Bell. Can you fear my denying you any Thing?

Mel. Either do you, or let me tell Sir *Harry Sprightly* that we are married.

Bell. The very Man I moſt apprehend. A Man who has a very large Share of Wit and Ill-Nature; a declar'd Enemy to Matrimony; an Advocate for Liberty; and one whom I have ever ſeconded in his keeneſt Invectives upon the Yoke for Life. What! would you expoſe me to his Raillery?

Mel. Are you then aſham'd of what you have done?

Bell. No: But ſhould not care he ſhould put me to the Trouble of anſwering every Thing I have my ſelf ſaid againſt Matrimony.

Mel. You muſt, however, ſubmit to that Trouble. There is an indiſpenſable Neceſſity for it.

Bell. How ſo?

Mel. Since you deſire to know, this declar'd Enemy to Marriage, this Inſenſible, this Advocate for Liberty, is juſt the reverſe of what you believe him. He never makes you a Viſit, but he entertains me with his Paſſion, and is as eager to be a Huſband, as you are fearful of being thought one.

Bell. Does Sir *Harry* then make Love to you?

Mel. Even ſo, Sir.

Bell. Impoſſible.

Mel. Why, you once thought me agreable.

Bell. Excuſe me, *Meliſſa*, I know not what I ſay But what muſt we do?

Mel. What I propos'd. I apprehended the Conſequence of telling you this; but Sir *Harry* is ſo importunate I could no longer conceal it. I leave you to conſider, if you can hit on any other Method more proper to rid me from his Perſecution. [*Exit.*

Bell. Am I to believe this, or not? It may be only an Invention, to make our Marriage publick. No: She's not capable of a Falſhood, but very capable of inſpiring Love. Sir *Harry* is caught; and it gives me a ſecret Pleaſure, that he's not the Inſenſible

ſenſible he pretends to be. Let me ſee though, who is he in Love with? Why, with my Wife; and I am pleas'd with it. Ha —— here my Honour is concern'd! My Honour! how is that concern'd? He does not know ſhe is my Wife; and I know her virtuous. I'll talk with Sir *Harry*, and if I can make him acknowledge his Weakneſs, I ſhall be leſs aſham'd of my own.

Thus common Folly takes away the Shame,
Whoe'r is guilty, will not dare to blame. *Exit.*]

ACT II.

Violetta *diſcover'd at her Toilet*, Pinwel *waiting.*

Vio. PInwel, did not you ſay Sir *Harry Sprightly* would be here? —— Pr'ythee tell me, doſt think I am indifferent to him?

Pin. To anſwer with Sincerity —— I believe —— altogether.

Vio. That's heartily vexatious. —— I wiſh he lov'd me —— ſigh'd, dy'd for me.

Pin. I believe you, Madam. But Sir *Harry* ſeems to me as indifferent to all our Sex, as a great Man to the Wants of his Creditors.

Vio. That's the very Reaſon I wiſh his Conqueſt; and I don't much doubt triumphing, if I once enter the War.

Pin. Let your Eyes declare it: Throw a Dart into the Enemy's Country.

Vio. Is it your ſerious Advice?

Pin. Or may I die a Virgin.

Vio. Then, Sir *Harry*, guard your Heart. Thou ſhalt ſee him at my Feet, Girl, this very Day.

Pin. But what do you propoſe by the Victory?

Vio. To expoſe and laugh at him; that he may know neither a polite Education, noble Birth, nor great Eſtate can hide the Fool.

Pin.

Pin. Nay, Madam, he does not deſerve that Character.

Vio. How! not deſerve it. When he pretends to withſtand the united Charms of our whole Sex.

Pin. Were I to adviſe, Madam, you ſhould triumph more to your Advantage. He has a fine Eſtate, and I would have you make no Scruple of binding him a Slave for Life. He's worth a hundred of this unknown *Horatio*, who, I fear, has found the Way to your Heart. Sir *Harry*'s a Courtier; and if he is as you ſay, a Fool, ſo much the better ſtill. A Courtier is always in the Faſhion, and a Fool at the very Tip Top of the Mode. Nothing is now more faſhionable than a complaiſant Husband.

Vio. There is ſomething in what you ſay.

Pin. Something, Madam! yes, every Thing; make *Horatio* give place to Sir *Harry*; turn out this unknown Intruder, this no Gentleman, whoſe Deſigns are on your Fortune.

Vio. You are too hot, *Pinwel.* His Air and Addreſs ſpeak him well-born, and my Glaſs aſſures me of his Sincerity; yet, as you ſay, after all, he may have ſome *Tendre* for my Fortune. And, now I think on't, I will ſo tyrannize when next I ſee him. Prithee, *Pinwel*, tell me Something that may heartily chagrin me.

Pin. Your Siſter and her philoſophical Husband are all to Pieces.

Vio. Impertinent! I want to be out of Humour, and you are giving me the moſt ſenſible Pleaſure. After ſuch an agreable Piece of News, I fear I ſhan't be tolerably ill-natured to Day.

Pin. I'll warrant you, Madam. You muſt know this Quarrel ended in a Reconciliation, ſo tender, ſo ſoft, and endearing.——

Vio. Then are they reconciled?

Pin.

Pin. Oh, Madam! ten Times fonder than ever; each ſtrives to make amends. My Maſter is all Obedience to my Lady.

Vio. The Fool!

Pin. My Lady is all Submiſſion to my Maſter.

Vio. The mean-ſpirited Wretch!

Pin. Tho', for all that, I perceive ſhe intends to keep him in Subjection.

Vio. I can hold no longer. —— How has ſhe the Aſſurance even to think of treating a Man of his Merit after ſuch a Manner? Were he my Husband, the Procedure might, indeed, be allow'd to me; but for my Siſter to aſſume ſuch Airs, 'tis inſupportable.

Pin. Well, Madam, are you prepar'd to meet *Horatio?* What Figure does he make in your Heart at preſent?

Vio. He's a hideous, monſtrous, frightful Fellow.

Pin. Here he comes, Madam, *fort a propos*, and I'll leave you together. *Exit.*

[Violetta *throws herſelf into an eaſy Chair, and takes no Notice of* Horatio *who enters.*]

Hor. You ſeem, Madam, to be entirely taken up with your own Thoughts, but it's no Wonder. She who thinks as juſtly as *Violetta*, can't be more agreably entertained.

Vio. Were you as complaiſant in your Behaviour, as you are for once right in your Judgment, you would hardly interrupt that Entertainment, by an unwelcome Viſit.

Hor. Tho' I dread your Frowns, yet even they are more ſupportable than Abſence.

Vio. I hope I am Miſtreſs of my own Apartment?

Hor. Oh! we are in our grand Airs, I find. [*Aſide.*

Vio. I would be alone. Leave me.

Hor. I obey. Yet firſt let me know the Crime that has baniſhed me.

Vio. Since when, Sir, am I become accountable to you

Hor. You are not,—— Yet if the Violence of my Paſſion.—— *Vio.*

Vio. Ah, for Heaven's ſake no Romantick Stuff!

Hor. I am dumb.

Vio. The Violence of my Paſſion, quotha! Eh! The very Expreſſion gives me the Vapours. —— Leave me this Moment.

Hor. Since it is your abſolute Command, I obey. [*Going.*

Vio. Stay, my Commands ſeem ſtrangely to agree with your Inclinations. You are in wonderful Haſte to be gone.

Hor. Madam, I thought my Abſence only cou'd oblige you.

Vio. I have thought better, and now command you to ſtay, that I may tell you how much I hate you.

Hor. I can't pretend to force Inclination; and ſince all my Aſſiduity, my Sighs, and tendereſt Proofs of the moſt ſincere Affection prove fruitleſs, I ſhall no longer diſturb your Quiet, by a vain Purſuit.

Vio. Your Paſſion is ſoon abated, cruel *Horatio.* [*Looks tenderly.*

Hor. What do I hear! charming *Violetta!* —— too well you know your Power.

Vio. I fear yours is too great.

Hor. Ah! repeat again th'enchanting Sound, make me happy, and ſay I am not indifferent to you.

Vio. My Tongue ſhall no longer bely my Heart, which I own bears the Impreſſion of *Horatio*; and were it not for ſome trifling Faults. ——

Hor. Tell me, tell me, my charming Fair, thoſe Faults, that I may endeavour, at leaſt, to correct 'em, and ——

Vio. I'll enumerate a few of 'em. I have obſerved, that you are too full of yourſelf, that the Conceit you have of your own Wit, leads you into ſatyrical Reflections on your beſt Friends; that thoſe whom

whom you flatter to their Faces, you rail at behind their Backs; that you are ſelf-intereſted, and court my Fortune, not my Perſon; that you are a great Diſſembler, a fickle Friend, and a falſe Lover. I'll not proceed, for though you had a thouſand ſuch trifling Faults as theſe, I love you too paſſionately not to overlook 'em. [*Sneering.*

Hor. I muſt retort her Sneer; Submiſſion blows up her Vanity, and gives her a Handle to uſe me ill. The Sex make but an ill Uſe of deſpotick Power. [*aſide.*] To convince you, how unjuſtly you charge me with being a Diſſembler, I will give you a Proof of my Sincerity. I confeſs you are beautiful as Truth; but then you are proud, inſolent, and envious. The Happineſs of another is your greateſt Misfortune; you have ſome Wit, but then you want Judgment; and this makes you affected, inconſtant, and whimſical. You would fain have all Mankind in Love with you, and this makes you hate every Woman of Merit. Your Sincerity's but the Effect of your Ill Nature; without Conſideration you ſay whatever comes uppermoſt; and for ſpreading News, whether true or falſe, nothing but a *Gazette* can rival you. I'll not proceed; for though you had a thouſand ſuch trifling Faults as theſe, I love you too paſſionately not to overlook 'em. [*Sneering.*

Vio. And yet you love me.

Hor. Yes; for whenever I look upon you, your Beauty hides all your Faults.

Vio. Horatio, I love you too well to wiſh you ſuch a Wife; and I have ſtill ſo much Tenderneſs for myſelf, as to avoid a Man who knows me ſo well. I'll never take a Husband who thinks I have any Imperfection.

Hor. I did but jeſt; my Tongue belied my Heart; you have no Imperfection.

Vio. May I believe you? My Heart's alarmed.

Hor. What muſt I do to convince you?

Vio.

Vio. You ſhall convince me by your Obedience.

Hor. Command.

Vio. Leave me this Minute, and never more ſee my Face

Hor. In earneſt?

Vio. In earneſt.

Hor. I obey. [*With a malicious Smile. Exit.*

Vio. The inſolent Wretch! I'll never ſee him more. What, call me Fool to my Face! —— but ——I deſerve it, for —— I love him. —— Am I then a Fool? —— No; his Merit ſecures me from that Title. —— I am a Coquette too! —— There may, perhaps, be ſomething in that Charge; I own I would be agreable; and what Woman does not wiſh to be admir'd? I am envious, forſooth, and can't bear with Patience to ſee another happy. I preſume he means my Siſter. Am I in the wrong to reſent a Girl's getting the Start of me, who is every Way my Inferior? I am proud. What fine Woman is not ſo? Whimſical; that's my Sex's Foible, rather than mine. Inconſtant; Variety is the greateſt Pleaſure of Life; and muſt I be blamed for what all the World likes? If my Sincerity is the Effect of Ill-Nature, can I help it? Ought any to be condemned for what is not in their Power to remedy? I would have all Mankind in love with me. Is it a Crime to deſire to pleaſe? I can't keep a Secret. Why no; it's not the Talent of our Sex. Well, I think I have fully anſwered every Accuſation, and am obliged in Juſtice to acquit my ſelf. *Enter* Meliſſa.

Mel. Of what, Siſter!

Vio. Why, *Horatio* has accus'd me of a thouſand Follies; and, upon an impartial Examination, I find I have not a ſingle Imperfection.

Mel. You give your ſelf an excellent Character, Siſter! But I a little doubt your Impartiality.

Vio. Shall I prove it by giving you yours?

Mel. I fear I ſhall come but badly off under your Examination.

Vio. I fear ſo too; for I'm not partial.

Mel. But is it not poſſible you may be deceiv'd?

Vio. No: I was never once out in my Judgment.

Mel. And yet you pronounce yourſelf faultleſs.

Vio. And will prove it too. You and I, Siſter, are alike in Nothing.

Mel. I hope the World thinks ſo.

Vio. O Vanity! The World does not view you with the Eyes of your Huſband: He, poor Man, may underſtand Books, but he gave a convincing Proof that he knew nothing of Woman, when he was taken with the falſe Glare of your Merit. You need not boaſt the Conqueſt: You were made for each other. He is a ——

Mel. Hold, Siſter: Take what Liberties you pleaſe with me; I can bear with 'em, when I reflect on your Diſappointment, which I know has made you level all the Fury of your Rage at *Belleſleur*'s Wife.

Vio. Diſappointment! Diſappointment! What can the Creature mean? Why ſure you don't think I can envy you the deſpicable Title of Wife to that poor Book-Worm, that ——

Mel. That what, Siſter? I deſire you would confine your Reſentment to me, and me alone. I have innocently offended; I did not know you deſigned his Conqueſt.

Vio. Conqueſt! his Conqueſt! Why, had I deſigned it, are you vain enough to imagine you could have prevented it?

Mel. Not if he had given the Preference to Years. I confeſs you are my elder Siſter.

Vio. Impertinent! —— Though, now I think on't, he might poſſibly have preferred you. His preſent Choice will never raiſe the Character of his Judgment.

Mel. Since you meet with ſuch diſagreable Objects in my Family, I would, for your Eaſe, deprive myſelf of the Pleaſure of your Company, and not take it ill, if you provide an Apartment elſewhere.

Vio.

Vio. Advice which agrees with your Inclinations, is readily liſten'd to. But here comes your Husband. I ſhall let him know the Compliment you made me.

Enter Bellefleur.

Here, Sir, your Wife.——

Bel. So! has *Meliſſa*, Madam, no Name, no other.——

Vio. I'm not now at leiſure to mind your ſplenetick Whims, —— your Wife has fairly forbid me her Houſe.

Bel. Is this true, *Meliſſa?*

Mel. Ah, my Dear!

Bel. I have often told you, Madam, I ſhould be glad to excuſe thoſe Expreſſions of your Tenderneſs. But what is the Matter? you have had ſome little Bickerings, I ſuppoſe,—— about ſome Trifle.

Vio. Trifle, Sir! do you think I am to be moved with Trifles?

Mel. My Siſter's Behaviour is ſuch.

Vio. Speak out, Madam.— You muſt know, Sir.—

Mel. Will you give me Leave, Siſter?

Vio. I thought I was the elder; you juſt now reminded me of it.

Bel. The Caſe is plain.—— I am ſatisfied you are both right.

Vio. This is intolerable. I can't bear this Unconcern! [*Aſide.*

Mel. You may, Sir, be merry in a more ſeaſonable Juncture.

Bel. Come, come, forget the Ground of your Quarrel; examining into it may renew it.——Pray forgive each other, and be reconciled.

Vio. Reconciled! and with one that forbad me her Houſe!

Bel. How, *Meliſſa*, could your Reſentment carry you ſuch Lengths!

Mel. Nothing ſhe could ſay of me cou'd have provoked me; but when ſhe fell foul on your Character, I own I could not bear it.

Bel. If you reſent only the Injury done me, you'll ſoon be Friends. I can't be moved with any Thing a Lady ſays.

Mel. You think then a Woman below your Reſentment.

Vio. I am of Opinion, that a fine Woman is worth an hundred muſty Philoſophers.

Bel. So I am brought into the Quarrel. [*Aſide.*] What I ſaid, was from the great Regard I have for your Sex. But pray tell me, how came this Falling out?

Mel. My Siſter can inform you.

Vio. You are altogether as able.

Mel. I don't remember any Thing of the Matter.

Vio. And I have quite forgot it.

Bel. A clear Caſe, and the Reaſon of this Quarrel is an excellent one for your being reconciled.

Vio. You know then the Reaſon.

Bel. Doubtleſs. Have you not both own'd, that your Quarrel was for—— you know not what?

Vio. So that you are proving us a Couple of Fools; though I am of Opinion, that even the weakeſt of the two, your own Wife, has at leaſt as much Senſe as her bookiſh Husband.

Bel. My Uneaſineſs, Madam, certainly gives you Pleaſure, or you would drop thoſe ungrateful Appellations of Wife and Husband. But ſince you think you have Reaſon for your Quarrel, e'en continue it; keep it up.

Vio. Sir, I don't want Advice. I know when to ſhew my Reſentment.

Bel. You do it with ſo good a Grace, nothing can be more agreable.

Vio. What, Siſter, ſhall we be the Sport of that Phlegmatick Philoſopher. No; had you called me old and ugly, I would ſooner have forgiven you; let's be Friends to vex him.

Bel. That's too cruel; you need only embrace each other, to nettle me thoroughly.

Vio.

Vio. Will you meet me half Way, Siſter?

Mel. With Pleaſure. [*They run to each other.*

Bel. To ſhew how heartily you have piqu'd me, I muſt kiſs you both.

Vio. O the Cheat! He has trick'd us into a Reconciliation.

Enter Bruſh.

Bru. Sir, an elderly Gentleman is without, who calls himſelf *Odway*, and deſires to ſpeak with you.

Bel. How! —— It is my Uncle! You have often heard me ſpeak of him. —— I muſt beg you two to retire; his Behaviour is rough, and he not altogether the moſt agreeable Companion for Ladies.

Vio. You have formerly given us a Character of him, and may believe we are not fond of the Honour of being known to him. Come, Siſter, let us make room for our Elders. [*Leads 'em to the Door.*

Enter Odway.

Od. Hey, Boys! Here's fine Doings indeed! —— What, my Nephew in cloſe Conjunction with a Brace of Harlots! Why what will this World come to? When I was a young Fellow, half a Couple of Whores would have been thought ſufficient for a reaſonable Man. It's Time he was married. [*Aſide.*] Why, *Belleſleur*, I find thou art upon Experimental Philoſophy.

Bell. My Uncle? [*Offers to embrace.*

Od. Ay, Sir, your Uncle *Odway*, your Mother's own Brother, Sir. Who are thoſe Harlots, Sir, who fled my Preſence, ſeeing the Picture of Virtue ſtamp'd in my Face?

Bell. Sir, you injure the Ladies.

Od. And what then, Sir? Dare you take their Part, or they take the Law. I have a good Sword, and a long Purſe, and will injure whom I pleaſe, Sir: 'Sbud, do you think I come to you to learn how to behave myſelf?

Bell. Sir, I am ſorry you ſhould put yourſelf in a Paſſion.

Od. Sir, I'll be in a Paſſion when I think fit: Sir, I found you taken up with two Cockatrices; and as you belong to me, Sir, I have a juſt Right to demand, who theſe Gipſies are.

Bell. Sir, if you would pleaſe to be calm.

Od. Sir, anſwer me categorically, Who are theſe Women, ha?

Bell. Whenever you will have Patience.

Od. Hark'ee, Sir, han't I been half an Hour expecting your Anſwer, with all the Patience of a Martyr? Do you know who I am, Sir?

Bell. Yes, Sir, you are my Uncle; for whom I have a juſt Reſpect; are Maſter of a great Fortune; courted by all your Neighbours; reſpected by all who know you; have an Intereſt in your Country; and care not a Groat for any Man.

Od. I find, Sir, you would evade my Queſtion. Who are theſe Women? Anſwer to any Thing but the Queſtion, and I diſinherit you, you Dog.

Bell. Sir, they are Ladies of undoubted Honour, Lovers of Learning, who ſometimes favour me with a Viſit, purely to turn over my Library.

Od. No doubt theſe Ladies are great Admirers of your —— your Natural Philoſophy.—— But paſs by theſe Female Philoſophers, and to the Point. —— I am come to Town to make your Fortune; I have brought my Wife's Daughter with me; all her Relations have agreed to the Match: And ſo, as ſhe is a young Girl, who muſt do as ſhe is bid, you ſhall marry her without the trouble of courting.

Bell. Marry her, Sir!

Od. Ay, marry her, Sir! —— What, does the Word ſtartle you? Dare you, Sir, diſlike my Propoſal, or entertain a Thought in Contradiction to what I think proper? 'Sbud, if I have a Mind to hang you, what have you to object to it? Ha, Sir!

Bell. Sir, I ſhall never diſpute your Commands: But I know you are too reaſonable not to allow me ſome Time for Conſideration.

Od.

Od. How like an Aſs this Fellow talks! Though I have not been bred at the Univerſity, Sir, yet I can tell when a Philoſopher talks Nonſence. You won't diſpute my Commands, and yet you want Time for Conſideration! For what Mr. *Syllogiſm?* What can your wiſe Head want to conſider, when by not diſputing my Commands, you are beforehand determined to obey them?

Bell. I might poſſibly convince you, Sir, that to marry the young Lady you propoſe, would be inconſiſtent with my Happineſs; or by allowing me ſome Time, my Obedience might prove the Effect of my Inclinations as well as Duty. Compulſion is ſhocking to our very Nature, and a forced Obedience cannot be grateful.

Od. Look'ee, Sir, I will be obey'd, and obey'd willingly, whether you will, or no: So, Sir, you're anſwer'd as to that Point.

Bell. I find, Sir, I have unhappily loſt that Tenderneſs you formerly ſhew'd me, only the Severity of the Parent now remains. That Indulgence which ——

Od. 'Sbud, you Son of a — This Fellow would make a wiſe Man mad. Do you call twenty thouſand Pounds and a fine Girl, Severity. I ſuppoſe, Sir, you are a modern Wit, ſmart upon Wedlock, and ſatirical upon a State which brought you into the World without Infamy, gave you the Character of a Gentleman, and a legal Claim to the Fortune you enjoy from your Mother. Were it not for Matrimony, 'sbud, you'd be a Son of a Whore, and I ſhould be aſham'd to own you.

Bell. I am already wedded to my Studies, and you would force me to a cruel Divorce. I was ſent into the World, to be a uſeful Member of the Society, and

Od. 'Sbud, Sir, how can you be more uſeful, or more juſt than by contributing to the Support of that Society; therefore, let the Conſequence be what it will, you ſhall be married for the publick Good, and my Humour: So, Sir, you know my Mind, I know your Duty. You know my Eſtate, and I know how I'll diſpoſe of it.

Bell. Sir, be pleas'd to hear Reaſon, and ——

Od. No, Sir, I will hear no Reaſon.—I won't be pleaſed to hear Reaſon becauſe, Sir, whatever you can urge contrary to my ſettled Reſolution, will not be Reaſon; and if it is Reaſon, will not pleaſe.—You muſt marry, you muſt marry this identical Girl, whom I have brought to Town.—It is ſo decreed, and *Jove* himſelf can't alter Fate.—To cut the Matter ſhort, prepare yourſelf to be married To-morrow.—No Words; — 'sbud, I am old *Lewis* XIV. *ſic volo*, and there's an End.—I leave you to conſider on't,—and ſo farewel, my wiſe Philoſopher. [*Exit.*

Bell. So my Affairs are in a very agreable Situation. The invincible Obſtinacy of my Uncle leaves me no Reſource. [*Enter* Pinwel.]

Pin. Sir, Sir *Harry Sprightly* has ſent to let you know he intends to dine with you to Day.

Bell. Who? Sir *Harry Sprightly*, 'Sdeath, the Man in the World I would moſt ſhun. Let ſomebody go and inform him. ——

Pin. Sir, he's already in the Houſe.

Bell. Let him know then that —that my Uncle—

Pin. 'Tis not neceſſary, Sir, he's now paying a Viſit to my Lady.

Bell. Is ſhe at Home?

Pin. Yes, Sir;—I left Sir *Harry* on his Knees before her. Well, ſure he is the moſt entertaining Perſon living. His Actions are ſo engaging, and his Words ſo moving, that—ſhe muſt be more than Woman who can reſiſt him.

Bell. 'Sdeath, there is no ſhunning him. —— Go tell him I'll wait on him.

Pin. You need not hurry yourſelf, Sir; for he does not any Way ſeem to be tir'd of his Company.

Bell. Be gone, and do as I bid you. [*Exit Pinwel.*] Sure every one in my Family takes a Pleaſure to torment me. —— Which Way to turn me, I know not. ——Time, if I can gain it, may aſſiſt me; but at preſent I am entirely at a Loſs.

[*Enter*

[*Enter* Pinwel, *croſſing the Stage*, Bruſh *following*.

Bru. Hold, Hold, Mrs. *Pinwel*, a Word with you.

Pin. What's that? —— my Shade! —— Piſh.

[*Running off*, Bruſh *follows*.

Bru. Thus *Syrinx* fled to ſave her darling Honour.
But to the Reed when chang'd, *Pan* play'd upon her. [*Catches her.*
You ſee the Effects of a ſenſeleſs Coyneſs, Mrs. *Pinwel*. The Story carries an excellent Moral.

Pin. This Impertinence is inſufferable. — Let me go this Minute, or — you ſhall dearly repent your Inſolence. Why ſure! [*breaks away*] Do you think I am to be pull'd and hawl'd by every *Jack-a-Dandy*, that takes it into his Head to be noiſy and troubleſom?

Bru. ſings. *Oh! turn thee, turn thee, cruel Fair,*
Oh! turn thee to my Moan.
Thoſe killing Looks your Slave can't bear,
They chill me into Stone.

Pin. Piſh, What wou'd you have with one? You have all of you ſuch deceitful Ways with you, that it's but common Prudence, to avoid giving any Opportunities for your uttering your Flatteries. —— You are all alike, warm Lovers, but cool Husbands; as eager to gain your Miſtreſſes, as you are willing to get rid of your Wives.

Bru. Theſe Suſpicions are an Injury to yourſelf, Mrs. *Pinwel*.
For Charms, like thine, will bind the Husband faſt,
And keep the Lover, when the Courtſhip's paſt.
So *Venus* look'd, when from the Sea ſhe roſe,
And left the Shell which did ſuch Charms encloſe.
As now I gaze, aſtoniſh'd Mortals gaz'd;
As I'm aſtoniſh'd, ſo were they amaz'd.
If then, an humble forward Suit can't move,
Nor Silence talkative inſpire thee, Love;
If a dull Pertneſs cannot touch thy Heart,
To Nature, if thou'rt deaf, and deaf to Art,
If wordy Nonſenſe, ſureſt Mark of Love,
Humble Preſumption, all in vain do prove,

Then

Then hope no more, poor flutt'ring Heart, but break;
Happy, to burſt for lovely *Pinwel*'s Sake.
But on my Tomb let theſe few Words be read,
For Pinwel *liv'd poor* Bruſh, *for her poor* Bruſh *is dead.*

Pin. Hold, I find I am but Woman, and feel all the Weakneſs of my Sex upon me. Such moving 'Plaints would pierce a Tyger's Heart, and call forth Pity from a flinty Rock. I am no Rock, nor can I longer hide my Love.

Bru. Liſten, ye Groves, to the enchanting Sounds, ye murmuring Brooks, ceaſe a while your Courſe, nor roll your limpid Streams, till you have heard my *Pinwel* yields to Love. Let Zephirs catch my Words, and bear 'em round to hollow Caves and Rocks, that Eccho too may learn to ſpeak my Joy, that *Pinwel* owns ſhe loves.

Pin. Filthy! Monſtrous! Horrid! This romantick Ribbaldry has quite cur'd me; Love, quotha, Love ſuch a whining Fellow as thou art? No, ſooner would I ſuffer the Addreſſes of a *Laplander*; in him, at leaſt, I ſhould find a Man.

Bru. I find I have made my Advances too regularly. I have begun my Siege in Form, but ſince you won't capitulate, take Care of a Storm; you know no Quarter's given.

Pin. My Quarters are not ſo eaſily beat up. I ſet you at Defiance. Storm, quotha! I wiſh I could ſee you at that Sport.

Bru. If once I enter Sword-in-Hand.

Pin. You may meet with a warm Reception.

Bru. Then, *Mars* be the Word.

Pin. And *Venus*, for me, [*He ruffles and kiſſes her; ſhe breaks from him.*] You are a downright ſaucy impudent Fellow; and if ever you treat me after the ſame impertinent Manner, I'll make you the Return you merit. Be gone, and leave me this Minute.

Bru. Look'ee, Mrs. *Pinwel*, you'll carry the Jeſt too far. Your Coquetry will cure your Lovers, and deprive you of what you wiſh —— a Husband. [*Exit.*

Pin.

Pin. I ſhan't play the Fool ſo far, Mr. *Bruſh.* And this laſt Behaviour of yours has done you no ſmall Service in my Opinion.

The whining Lover at a Diſtance ſighs,
And marks each Motion of the fair one's Eyes.
Trembling he ſpeaks, when he would tell his Pain,
And baſhful, loſes what he hopes to gain.
Not ſo the Man well vers'd in female Arts.
He knows that Modeſty ne'er conquers Hearts:
Knows that our Tongues and they are ne'er ally'd,
And back'd by Impudence, inſults our Pride.

ACT III.

Enter Bellefleur, *followed by Sir* Harry.

Sir *Har.* HA! ha! ha! If I did not know you for a Man of good Nature and Senſe, I ſhould have a very mean Opinion both of your Parts and Temper. How could you, in ſo enlivening a Converſation, where ſo fine a Woman as *Meliſſa* bore a Part, keep this moody Humour?

Bel. You are a Stranger to the Preſſures I labour under. Not to be ſenſible of Misfortunes, argues rather Stupidity than Fortitude. Philoſophy may ſupport the Frailty of Nature, but not baniſh it.

Sir *H.* I have heard a great many fine Things of that ſame Philoſophy. But, to ſpeak freely, I think ſhe treats you like a modern Friend, and ſeems to deſert you when you have moſt Need of her Aſſiſtance. Pr'ythee, what is it that chagrins you?

Bel. Oh! Sir *Harry*, I'm in a Ship on Fire. Of two Evils, I have the Choice, but know not which is leaſt. I muſt either be guilty of Diſobedience and Ingratitude to the Parent who has given me more than Life, my Education, or loſe what I think preferable to Life, my Liberty. My Uncle has brought up a raw Country Girl, his late Wife's Daughter, and inſiſts on my marrying her. Sir

Sir *H.* That's good, indeed! Can he imagine, that you who have ſo well deſcribed the ſlaviſh and miſerable Condition of a married State, would ſo far give up your Reaſon, as to become a Husband?

Bel. How the Word perplexes. [*aſide.*

Sir *H.* You, who know all the Advantages of Liberty, who can ſee *Meliſſa*, with Eyes regardleſs of her Charms, and think there are none but what Philoſophy affords? Can he imagine that you will barter the Pleaſures of learned Sheets, for the Torments of matrimonial ones; where often a troubleſome Fondneſs, Jealouſy, Impertinence, Imprudence, Noiſe, and Folly, neſtle altogether, and jointly conſpire to rob the unhappy Husband of his Reſt.

Bel. I own this may be retorted on me: I have taken a little too much Liberty with the married State.

Sir *H.* Why, you don't recant, I hope.

Bel. I think I have ſhewn more Wit than Prudence. I am now better inform'd; and 'tis but Juſtice to own an Error.

Sir *H.* Poor *Belleſleur*! I begin to pity you; I fear there may be ſome Ground for the flying Report of your being ty'd for Life. Though I have always defended you; for as I know your good Senſe, ſo I am fully perſuaded, you could not be guilty of ſo great a Weakneſs.

Bel. I thank your Friendſhip, and am ſenſible of your Sincerity.

Sir *H.* I have the ſame Confidence in yours; and ſhall prove it, by telling you I have an Affair of that Importance, it requires your friendly Aſſiſtance.

Bel. Let me but know, in what you may command me.

Sir *H.* I will then without Reſerve unboſom myſelf. But firſt let me ask you one Queſtion, Do you yourſelf make any Advances to *Meliſſa*?

Bel. I aſſure you, none.

Sir *H.* I ever thought ſo. And have maintained, that any one might avow the Paſſion he had for her, and tell even you, that he adored her. *Bell.*

Bell. Ay —— why not? —— How he tortures me! [*Aſide.*] But to the Point.

Sir *H.* Then I may freely tell you, —— I love her.

Bel. How! you jeſt.

Sir *H.* Nay —— adore her.

Bel. Meer Banter.

Sir *H.* By Heavens, 'tis Truth.

Bell. So much the worſe. I bluſh for you. —— The World has the ſame Opinion of you it has of me; therefore —— fly *Meliſſa.*

Sir. *H.* Pardon me, dear *Bellefleur*, If I cannot, in this, follow your Advice. For know, my Friend, I love her to that Degree, I would make her Miſtreſs of my Fortune. In a Word, I would marry her.

Bell. Marry her, Sir *Harry!* Why you would be the Jeſt of the whole Town.

Sir *H.* Let me be happy in *Meliſſa*, I ſhall deſpiſe their Wit. So no more Diſſuaſion; I'm determin'd.

Bell. Be aſſured, Sir *Harry*, you ſhall never have my Concurrence in your committing ſo great a Folly.

Sir *H.* Here comes *Meliſſa:* And, as you'll not befriend my Paſſion, let me engage you to ſtand neuter.

Bell. On that you may depend.

Enter Meliſſa.

Mel. I'm impatient till I know whether *Bellefleur* has freed me from Sir *Harry*'s Perſecutions, by diſcovering our Marriage to him.

Sir *H.* Madam, you was the Subject of our Converſation. Even the mentioning you gave me a Pleaſure which could be only heighten'd by your Preſence. *Bellefleur* is our Friend, and I have made him my Confident.

Mel. Confident! In what?

Sir *H.* In my Addreſſes to you.

Mel. Indeed you have done me the Honour to declare a Paſſion for me, but can you charge me with giving you any Encouragement to purſue it?

Sir *H.* I cannot boaſt the leaſt; but as Hope is what laſt leaves us, and ſo we eaſily flatter ourſelves in

in what we wiſh. I love you, *Meliſſa*, with a Fondneſs which enables me to ſupport your Frowns; nor do I doubt but one Day I ſhall get the better of your Cruelty, by the Aſſiſtance of your Pity.

Mel. I wiſh, Sir *Harry*, both for your Eaſe and my own, you would not believe me fickle. I have more than once aſſured you that your Purſuit is vain. I value you as a Friend, but never can admit you as a Lover.

Sir *H.* Hard Sentence!

Bell. Look'ee, Sir. *Harry*, I am ſo well acquainted with *Meliſſa*, that I know ſhe has not the Inconſtancy common to her Sex. I adviſe you therefore, as a Friend, to think no more of her. But if you reſolve to try your Fortune further, I leave you together. Win her and wear her. [*Exit.*

Sir *H.* May I not hope, Madam, that Time and my Services——.

Mel. Don't deceive yourſelf, Sir *Harry*; for know, that ſhould Youth, Beauty, Eloquence, and Love, all join'd together in the Perſon of a Prince, endeavour to make me change, their Attempts would be juſt as fruitleſs as all yours have been. [*Exit.*

Sir. *H.* I am leſs touch'd with her Indifference, than ſurpriz'd at her Conſtancy. A Woman, and Conſtant! 'Tis a Miracle, produced by Heaven to be my Scourge. Yet will my fooliſh Heart, 'ſpite of my Reaſon, perſiſt in loving her. Cannot I — ha, her Siſter comes moſt opportunely. I'll make her a Tender of my Heart; and if I can but triumph in my Turn, I ſhall retrieve my Honour, and ſatiate my Revenge. *Enter* Violetta.

Vio. Yonder's the inſenſible Sir *Harry*. I cannot bear his Indifference. I'll aim at his Heart, and reſolve its Conqueſt. But ſhould I fail in the Attempt, I ſhall have the Pleaſure to pique *Horatio*, and make him jealous.

Sir *H.* This, Madam, may prove a dangerous Minute, and my Reaſon adviſes me to a Retreat. But thoſe

thoſe Charms which have awak'd her Fears, force me to a Stay that may, perhaps, prove fatal.

Vio. So, the Beginning promiſes Succeſs. O fye! Sir *Harry*, they have not the Power to give the leaſt Alarm. *Enter* Horatio *unperceived.*

Sir *H.* They are ſuch, Madam, as give you abſolute Command, and force me to acknowledge my Heart has long paid you ſecret Adoration.

Vio. As I ſuſpected.—— I am acquainted with Sir *Harry*'s Complaiſance, which gains him the particular Regard of all who know him, and will not ſuffer me to refuſe him my Eſteem.

Sir *H.* Eſteem, Madam! Is that a Recompence for a Heart entirely loſt?

Vio. I thought my Eſteem would rather be look'd on as extravagant, than complain'd of as inſufficient; eſpecially to a Perſon who values himſelf on his Indifference.

Sir *H.* The more Infidel I have been, the greater is your Glory in my Converſion. Here I renounce my former Errors, and own to you I love.

Vio. O fye! Such a Word from you, Sir *Harry*! Why you'll loſe your Character with the Wits.

Sir *H.* I glory, Madam, in the Paſſion your Eyes have inſpir'd; they are ſufficient Vouchers to prove a Sincerity——.

Vio. Which I ſhall want Faith to credit.

Sir *H.* O why, my Charmer?

Vio. The Conqueſt would be too glorious for me to hope. [*Hides her Face with her Fan.*

Sir *H.* Ah! Can you bluſh in performing an Act of Juſtice? Avow your Pity, and reward a Flame—.

Vio. [*Feigning Baſhfulneſs.*] I beg, Sir *Harry*, you will drop this Subject. You pretend a Paſſion for me, and I know you inconſtant.

Sir *H.* When I ſay I love the charming *Violetta*, I am Truth itſelf. Egad, I lye as readily as if bred at the Bar. [*Aſide.*

Vio. I cannot promiſe an equal Tenderneſs; but I find my Heart ſpeaks---and—fluttering tells me---

Sir *H.* What, my Angel? *Vio.*

Vio. That I am a very great Diſſembler. [*Aſide.*

Sir *H.* I have her ſecure; ——ſhe's my own. [*Aſide.*

Vio. He's at laſt converted. [*Aſide.*

Sir *H.* How credulous is a Coquette! [*Aſide.*

Vio. A Novice in Love, how ridiculous! [*Aſide.*

Sir *H.* You ſeem penſive, Madam.

Vio. I was excuſing to myſelf my Weakneſs, by reflecting on the Power of your Merit.

Sir *H.* And I was computing my own Happineſs, by contemplating on the Force of your Beauty.

Hor. And I have been laughing to ſee two doughty Champions ſurrender to each other at the firſt Encounter. I thought, Sir *Harry*, your Heart impenetrable, and that Lady's altogether inflexible.

Vio. [*Aſide.*] He's jealous ——horrid jealous——and I have my Wiſh.—— I hope you heard all that paſt.

Sir *H.* His Curioſity may prove lucky; and this made known to *Meliſſa*, produce a happy Effect. [*Aſide.* Let me tell you, Sir, this Intruſion does not agree with your uſual good Manners.

Hor. How, Sir!

Vio Excuſe an Effect of Jealouſy.

Hor. You miſtake Madam, I can't give into ſo great a Folly.

Vio. What, you are not jealous then?

Hor. Of whom? An Inconſtant!

Vio. Was ever any thing ſo impudent?

Hor. The Man who flatters himſelf with your Conſtancy, muſt be a Fool. Nothing is more natural than your Fickleneſs, which I ſee without Uneaſineſs or Surprize.

Vio. Oh! I could ſtrangle him!

Sir *H.* This proves my Happineſs much greater than I imagined: That your Paſſion for me is truly Sincere, and that on my Account alone you have hitherto been inconſtant. I ſhall take my Leave. Guard well a Heart you have given me Hopes is mine. If you can bear up againſt his Jealouſy, I ſhall then know how far I can rely upon it. [*Exit.*

Hor. He ſeems to know you.

Vio.

Vio. Be it ſo, what is that to you, and by what Authority do you thus purſue me? If I remember, I commanded you to avoid my Sight, and you have dar'd to ſlight thoſe Commands; nay, have had even the Preſumption to ſurprize me with Sir *Harry*. And when I endeavour'd to make him ſenſible it was the Effect of Jealouſy, you gave yourſelf Airs of not being jealous.

Hor. No — I am not — and again repeat it.

Vio. How! [*angrily.*

Hor. Nay, it is Truth. When Sir *Harry* ſwore he lov'd you, he deceiv'd you. And when you promis'd to reward his Paſſion, you deceiv'd him. Could I be jealous at ſuch a Comedy?

Vio. Pray, how came you to know all this? Are you the only Perſon I could charm?

Hor. Whatever Effect your Beauty has on others, I am ſatisfy'd it will make no Impreſſion on Sir *Harry*.

Vio. And pray your Reaſon?

Hor. Reaſon!

Vio. Ay.

Hor. He does not like your Character.

Vio. And I maintain he loves me to Exceſs.

Hor. And I'll maintain, another has Poſſeſſion of his Heart.

Vio. And who I pray?

Hor. Even your Siſter.

Vio. My Siſter! Moſt ridiculous.

Hor. 'Tis Fact. I proteſt he loves her.

Vio. Your Proteſtation's in vain. I will not believe it.

Hor. Juſt as you pleaſe. But 'tis Fact, I ſay.

Vio. Why then ſhould he ſo paſſionately addreſs me, and be ſo importunate for a Return!

Hor. Nay, I know not, unleſs his Reſentment for being denied made him offer his Heart to you. If you have a Mind to unravel this Myſtery, ask *Meliſſa*, ſhe'll confirm what I have ſaid.

Vio. 'Tis your Opinion then, that my Sister's refusing him, is the only Ground of his pretended Passion for me; and that I am not capable of inspiring Love, but in those Hearts she's pleas'd to reject.

Hor. Pardon me, *Violetta*, mine surrendering to you at first Sight, proves the contrary.

Vio. A Trifle, not worth the Acceptance.

Hor. So your Tongue tells me, but your Heart contradicts your Words.

Vio. However meanly you may think of my Sincerity, yet in this Point, you'll find they'll both agree.

Hor. Nay, all this shan't persuade me that I'm indifferent to you.

Vio. Your Self-conceit is insupportable. Did we not just now quarrel?

Hor. Yes, to have the Pleasure of being reconcil'd.

Vio. I have no such Inclination.

Hor. Hark ye, *Violetta*, I am cut out for your Lover. No other Man would have Courage and Constancy enough, to follow you thro' all the Mazes of your Coquetry. But I know that your Heart has ever been a Stranger to your Words and Actions. You have traduced it in both. Those would speak it vain and fickle; but I know it in Reality to be noble, open, just, and constant.

Enter Bellefleur.

Bel. O *Horatio!* the fatal Hour I so long have dreaded, draws near. I'm on the Brink of Despair, and without your friendly Advice can help me in this Extremity, I am lost.

Hor. What's the Matter!

Bel. I have just now receiv'd the News of my Father's being in Town, and I expect him hourly.

Hor. I

Hor. I foreſee no dreadful Conſequence in this.

Bel. No! Can you imagine, when my Father knows the Match my Uncle intends me, that he will not join with him in it?

Vio. A mighty Misfortune! If that is all the Ground of your Fears, I can remove it.

Bel. As how, dear Siſter?

Vio. Why — Tell him that you are already married.

Bel. At ſuch a Time as this, I might have expected a more ſerious Anſwer.

Enter Odway.

Come, Nephew, you muſt with me. My Girl is dreſs'd out in all her Airs, to receive your Viſit. 'Sbud, What's here? One of your Philoſophers again! I thought I had already ſhewn my Diſlike of theſe female Viſitants. [*Going to* Vio.] Look ye, Madam, I am a plain Dealer; give me Leave to tell you, I had rather ſee you elſewhere. Not that I ſhould break my Heart, if I never ſaw you again, for — I don't like your Countenance.

Vio. The brutiſh Clown!

Od. coming to *Vio*] What's that, Madam! What's that you ſay?

Hor. Hold, Sir.

Vio. To anſwer you with the ſame Politeneſs, you ſeem to be Maſter of; know, I never yet ſaw any thing ſo *rebutant*, as both your Aſpect and Breeding. Therefore in pure Compliment to my own Eyes, I ſhall fly ſo hideous a Sight. *Horatio*, your Hand. [*Exit.*

Od. Odsbud, I'm glad ſhe's gone. Had ſhe provok'd me longer, by her Stay, I don't know what would have been the Conſequence. Who is ſhe? Whence comes ſhe? Where does ſhe dwell?

Bel. Sir, ſhe's a Lady of a good Family, comes from *Northampton*, and returns to Morrow.

Odw. The ſooner the better. But come, to the Buſineſs in Hand. Are you ready to go? For I'm impatient 'till you ſee my Girl, and ſhe, poor Thing, I'll warrant, as impatient 'till ſhe ſees you. So let's loſe no more Time, but away.

Enter Bruſh.

Bruſh. Sir, there's a ſtrange Gentleman below would ſpeak with you.

Odw. Pſha, more Interruptions! Tell him, Sirrah, that your Maſter's gone out, that he is engag'd, and that he is ſo ill he cannot poſſibly ſee Company. [*Thruſting* Bruſh *away.*

Bel. What ſort of a Perſon?

Bru. An elderly Gentleman, he ſays he's from *Eſſex.*

Bel. As I live, My Father! Fly, wait on him up.

Odw. Pſha! the old Fool my Brother-in-Law, what can he want?

Bel. I beg, Sir, you'll treat him with the Reſpect due to his Character.

Odw. 'Sbud, Sir, I know how to behave my ſelf I hope. What have you ever got by his Character? Was it his Character gave you an Education, or my Care? Character, quotha! As your Father has play'd the Fool, I will be free enough to tell him of it.

Enter Old Bellefleur.

Bel. My Father! The Joy of ſeeing you, Sir, after ſo long a Separation, is too great for Words.

Old Bell. Oh my Son, how indulgent is kind Heaven in permitting me once again to embrace thee! May the ſame Power protect and bleſs thy Vertue.

Vertue. Ha, my Brother too! This is a Pleaſure unexpected.

Odw. What Wind blew you hither! What do you want?

Old Bell. How, Brother! Is not the Affection of a Parent ſufficient Cauſe for a Viſit to a Son?

Odw. Ay, that't true. And the Affection of a Husband ſufficient Cauſe for a Viſit to a Wife. So, come along, Nephew. Buſineſs is not to be neglected for Ceremony.

Old Bell. After a Separation for ſome Years, you may allow a Father ——

Odw. Why, what have you to ſay to him? You are glad to ſee him, he is glad to ſee you, and you can ſay no more, if you were a twelvemonth together. Your Paternal kindneſs conſiſts in Words, mine in Actions.

Old Bell. I am very ſenſible how much we both are indebted you. I ſhall ever acknowledge what my Son——

Odw. 'Sbud, I wonder you have the Face, to call him ſo to mine. I allow you were the means of his being in the World, but I of his knowing how to live in it. He has from you his Paſſions, from me the Power of ruling them; from you the empty Title of a Gentleman; from me a good Eſtate to ſupport it, you pray for his Happineſs, I procure it him: for I have got him a Wife, with twenty thouſand Pound. Now which of us two, has the better claim to the Title of Father?

Old Bell. Brother, I will diſpute with you nothing.

Odw. Nothing! Why that's the very Fortune you'll leave your Son. Pox, when a Man's convinc'd, and wants Argument, he ſhelters himſelf under the Cover of Complaiſance. I once knew you a Man of good Senſe; but being wiſe enough to be Security to the Crown, and having your

Eſtate extended for your Friend, you have loſt all Pretenſions to common Senſe.

Bel. Sir, my Father's Misfortunes ariſing from his Humanity, he is rather to be lamented than reproach'd. He generouſly ſerv'd his Friend, and met with an ungrateful Return. Is there any thing more Common than to ſee the Man of Probity impos'd upon.

Old Bell. Brother, you have this Advantage by my Misfortune, that your Generoſity to him appears in a ſtronger Light. May not I know the Lady for whom you deſign him?

Odw. I'll warrant your tickliſh Honour is alarm'd, leſt it ſhould be ſome Citizen's Daughter, whoſe prudent Oeconomy may patch up your fooliſh——I beg your Pardon——your honourable Extravagance. For once, I'll make you eaſy; 'tis my Wife's Daughter. I hope your Honour won't ſuffer by the Alliance.

Old Bell. Brother, ſhe is well born; and, I thank your Care.—This indeed ſpeaks the Parent; and if I don't return you Thanks equal to your Goodneſs, it is that our Language is too barren to expreſs the Senſe I have of what I owe you. Son, my Joy is equal to the Bleſſing deſign'd you.

Bel. I am truly ſenſible of my Uncle's Generoſity, but——

Old Bell. But what, Son? Here's no Ground for Exception.

Odw. True.

Old Bell. She is brought up under your Uncle's Care: I can anſwer for her Modeſty and Education.

Odw. Right.

Old Bell. I have heard ſhe is extremely pretty.

Edw. 'Sbud, Brother, as right a Philly as any in the Country.

Old Bell.

Old Bell. And with all this ſo great a Fortune——

Odw. Ouns, twenty thouſand Pounds, Brother!

Old Bell. What can be objected to ſo agreeable and advantageous a Match?

Bel. Sir, ſhe is but fifteen Years old, a meer Child.

Odw. 'Sbud, you Jackanapes, if you don't find her Woman enough, I'll conſent to a Divorce.

Old Bell. The Exception's idle. Brother, I could wiſh the Ceremony already over.

Bel. Even as I expected. My Father's coming thus unluckily, compleats my Misfortune.

Odw. We have loſt the Morning now by your coming.——But come, we'll dine here, and viſit my Daughter in the Afternoon.

Old Bell. Let's in and conſider on the neceſſary Preparations for haſtening this Wedding. Believe me, Brother, my Satisfaction is ſo great, I have but one Wiſh more, and that is an Opportunity to convince you of my Gratitude.

Odw. Pho, a Ruſh on your Gratitude.—Come along. [*Exit.*

Bel. My Heart foreboded this.

Th' Unhappy ſo for coming Ills prepare,
And dread each Hour is bringing on new Care.

ACT IV.

Enter BELLEFLEUR.

IT is impoſſible, in this perplexity, to make any concluſion. My Thoughts deſtroy each other. I no ſooner reſolve, but I reject what before I approv'd. The more I endeavour to extricate my ſelf, the more I am entangled.

Enter Old Bellefleur.

Old Bell. Son, I have been in ſearch of you.

Bell. What are your Commands, Sir?

Old Bell. Your ſudden departure from Table, gave me uneaſineſs. I am ſatisfied ſome important Affair lies heavy on your Spirit; your diſorder is too viſible: unboſom yourſelf to me, What is it that diſturbs you?

Bell. Your tenderneſs makes you too apprehenſive for me.

Old Bell. No, your Conduct at Table confirms my Suſpicion. You were quite abſent: You never ſpoke but when forc'd, and then your anſwers were foreign to the Queſtions. To what then can I attribute this Behaviour?

Bell. Sir, finding my ſelf indiſpoſed, I withdrew, leſt I might give diſturbance.

Old Bell. Your indiſpoſition ſeems rather of the mind than otherwiſe. Come, deal ingenuouſly with me; am not I your Father? Nay, am not I your Friend?

Friend? As the one, can you doubt my tenderneſs? as the other, can you ſuſpect my honour? You have ſome hidden Grief oppreſſes you. Confide in me. Tell me; is it not the match which my Brother propoſed that cauſes this concern in you? Don't diſtruſt my fondneſs; ſpeak out.

Bell. O Sir, I cannot diſtruſt ſo good, ſo indulgent a Father. But when I reſolve to open my Heart to you, Reſpect and Fear of diſpleaſing tye my tongue.

Old Bell. I thought, *Belleſleur*, that I had hitherto ſhewn more the Candor of a Friend, than the Authority of a Parent.

Bell. Duty obliges me to conſult your Will, where the Parent is intereſted, and Gratitude to ask your advice, where that of a friend is neceſſary. No wonder then, if I am aſhamed to own, I have fail'd in what I owe you, whether in the one or the other Capacity.

Old Bell. The way then, to make amends for what is paſt, is to be leſs on the reſerve for the future. I have, as your Friend, a right to enquire into your Uneaſineſs, having juſt claim to be admitted tomy ſhare. Say; are you averſe to the Match propos'd, I am againſt it; are you otherwiſe engaged; I approve it.

Bell. This Goodneſs charms me; and I ſhould be wanting in my Return to ſuch indulgence, ſhould I ſtill conceal what I have in ſecret wiſh'd to have made known to you. I am, indeed, already engaged; gueſs, Sir, the reſt; and as you are the beſt of Fathers, oblige me not to mention the only thing which I have dar'd, without conſulting you.

Old Bell. Be brief, ſpeak without reſtraint.

Bell. O Sir! ſpare my Confuſion,—and know—I cannot give it utterance. [*Kneels.*

Old Bell. Out with it.

Bell. I am then—— *Old*

Old Bell. What?

Bell. Married.

Old Bell. I am ſatisfied. Riſe, my Son; I wiſh the choice you have made may prove worthy of you: May you live together long and happy.

Bell. As the goodneſs with which you receive my Confeſſion, and pardon my Fault, makes my Happineſs compleat, ſo the beauty of her mind, who has bleſt me with her Hand, will make it laſting.

Old Bell. Why then did you conceal your marriage?

Bell. As I prefer'd my Happineſs to my Intereſt, I married a Lady whoſe Fortune might not anſwer my Uncle's Expectations; and I fear'd his Anger influencing you.

Old Bell. The Suſpicion was unjuſt. The Queſtion now is what Expedient ſhall we find to amuſe your Uncle? The utmoſt Care muſt be taken to conceal this affair from him, for ſome time. I juſtly doubt his being reconcil'd to your Marriage, as he very ſeldom is to Reaſon; and I fear his Reſentment will cut you off his Eſtate.

Bell. I have little reaſon to doubt it: but the Loſs gives me no Uneaſineſs. The Competency I have ſatisfies my ambition.

Old Bell. I allow our Happineſs does not conſiſt in the having a great deal: But, for all that, no prudent Man will wantonly loſe an Eſtate, which he may ſave by management. Wherefore, do you ſeem to approve the Match; I will ſecond you in it, but ſhall perſuade him to allow you a longer time. If we gain this point, we may hereafter work upon him to liſten to Reaſon.

Bell. I ſhall in every thing obſerve your Directions.

Old Bell. Your Unkle comes. I would not have you ſeen. Shew your Confidence in my Friendſhip,

ſhip, by diſpelling that Cloud which hangs upon you.

Bell. I ſhall endeavour to obey you. [*Exit.*

Old Bell. I perceive my Brother's in a paſſion. I muſt let him vent it; for to argue with him, 'till he has diſcharged his Choler, would be to confine the winds.

Enter Odway.

Odw. Was ever Parent, was ever Gentleman ſo us'd! To riſe from table, and —Oh! yonder's my ſententious Brother. Hark ye, Sir, do you call this Manners? What's the meaning that I am us'd ſo ſcurvily both by you, and that unmannerly Puppy, your Philoſophical Son? 'Sbud were he mine, I'd teach him how to behave himſelf.

Old Bell. Even as I ſuſpected!

Odw. Why does he not follow my Example, and learn to be polite and hoſpitable? Did he ever ſee me riſe the firſt from Table? 'Sbud, Sir, I receive my Friends openly, and make 'em drink heartily; and who receives me with a clouded Brow, I had as lief he'd bid me turn out.

Old Bell. Sir, my Son was indiſpos'd.

Odw. 'Sbud, Sir, what Bus'neſs has he to be indiſpos'd, while I am in Town? But I hope you were not indiſpos'd; you might have ſtaid, and ſaid, Here's to you. I hate to drink by my ſelf: For if I have no body to pledge me, I get drunk out of Madneſs. The Puppy was out of Humour all Dinner-time.

Old Bell. Your Nephew loves and reſpects you. You miſtake his diſorder for ill humour. And as for me —

Odw. It's not a Half-penny matter. You are an incorrigible old Fool, and I have no hopes of your

your ever being otherwiſe. But what can diſcompoſe the Blockhead?

Old Bell. My Son's Diſorder proceeds from his reſolution to pay a blind Obedience to your Commands; and your allowing him ſo ſhort a time for his Marriage, makes him juſtly concern'd for his future Happineſs.

Odw. 'Sbud, you two would make a Sanhedrim mad. Have not I heard your Philoſopher ſay, there is no ſuch a thing as Happineſs on this ſide the Grave. Now, if this be true, he is apprehenſive for nothing; and if it is not true, the Philoſopher is a Lyar.—That's all, Brother.

Old Bell. I am not to enter into diſputes with you, I appeal to your own reaſon, and that will lay before you the inconveniencies of an overhaſty marriage. Experience ſhews, that ſuch are often follow'd by a very ſpeedy Repentance.

Odw. 'Sbud, Brother, here's no room for Repentance. If he likes his wife, why ſhould he repent? If he don't like her—why—he's a Philoſopher, and knows—Repentance is to no purpoſe.

Old Bell. But conſider, Sir, that———

Odw. 'Sbud, Sir, I won't conſider. I am reſolved he ſhall be married to morrow. And if I thought conſidering would alter my reſolution, I would never conſider again as long as I live. So, no more words, Brother.—The Dye is caſt; the Day is fix'd, and I am inexorable.

Old Bell. You have a tenderneſs for your daughter-in-law, and in common decency her inclinations ought to be conſulted. Allow him ſome time to make his Addreſſes to the young Lady.

Odw. Why he'll have time enough for that when he's married,— that ſhall be to morrow, or—he's no Heir of mine.

Old

Old Bell. You can't, Sir, imagine I have any other view in requiring you to delay this Marriage, but the good of every one concern'd. The world is cenſorious; your probity will be queſtioned, and you'll be tax'd with having more regard to the Intereſt of your own Family, than to the Truſt repoſed in you as Guardian to this Orphan. All this, Sir, may be prevented, by allowing ſome time; and you will have your wiſh compleated in the happineſs of both.

Odw. What do you tell me of the World?

Old Bell. But you value your Character; and allow me, that he who does, muſt have ſo much Complaiſance for the World, as to ſave Appearances. It is not ſufficient to be ſelf-conſcious of having acted uprightly. A ſmall delay will prevent cenſure, and can be followed by no ill conſequences.

Odw. Well, how much Time is requiſite to conſult the Girl's Inclinations; to make Addreſſes; to compleat my wiſh in the Happineſs of both, and to prevent Cenſure?

Old Bell. Suppoſe you ſhould allow a month or two?

Odw. You would not have him married theſe two Months?

Old Bell. I think the Reſpite is not very great.

Odw. Look ye, Brother, I'll allow more.

Old Bell. I am glad you——

Odw. For, d'you ſee, here's a Letter I have juſt received from my intimate Friend, Sir *Peeviſh Teſty*, who propoſes my Girl's marrying his Nephew; and ſo, Sir, your Son may take what time he pleaſes to conſult the inclination of a Wife. Since I find ſo many obſtacles to mine, I'll agree with Sir *Teſty*, ſettle my Eſtate upon my Daughter, and leave the Philoſopher to ſeek for one in the *Via Lactea*; and ſo, Brother, I'm your Friend and Servant *Nic. Odway.* [*Going.*

Old

Old Bell. Hold, Brother, we may repent ſooner than recall a raſh Action. Since you don't reliſh the Reaſons I have given for this Delay, you ought not to doubt my Son's Obedience.

Odw. Well, then, that you ſha'n't ſay I am obſtinate, I will allow him a Week. But not a minute; not a moment longer, ſhould he bring all his Heatheniſh Acquaintance of Gods and Goddeſſes to requeſt, and *Cicero* himſelf to perſuade me. Therefore no more words; you have my final reſolution. I'll to my Girl, and endeavour to comfort her on this Delay. So, Brother, your Servant. [*Exit.*

Old Bell. This Reſpite is almoſt beyond what I could have hop'd. If I regarded my Son's Intereſt only, I ſhould blame his having made this ſtep: But as he is ſatisfy'd in the Choice he has made, and may live happily, if not ſplendidly, I cannot but think he has acted with prudence. I will go and conſult him on the meaſures proper to be taken in this ſhort time, to win upon his Unkle; which I ſhould not deſpair of, would he reflect, that

Life with ſo many various Ills is fraught,
That Eaſe at any Price is cheaply bought. [*Exit.*

Enter Violetta, *followed by* Pinwel.

Vio. Patience. Quotha! the very word enflames me. Let the Daſtard and unrelenting fool cloak his Meanneſs with the pretended Virtue, a Soul, like mine, ſcorns the low pretext, and will revenge the wrong. I am injur'd; Sir *Harry* has inſulted me, and I will have Satisfaction.

Pin. Madam, this paſſion does him too much Honour. Your ſlighting him will be a thorough Revenge.

Vio.

Vio. I abhor, hate and deteſt him. Ah! here comes his Goddeſs.

Enter Meliſſa.

So, Madam: You carry Triumph in your Eyes; but I think the Meanneſs of the Object leſſens very much the Glory of your Conqueſt, and ought not to give that mighty ſatisfaction, which you vainly endeavour to conceal.

Mel. I wiſh, Siſter, you would moderate your Paſſion. You know that nothing could be more diſagreeable to me, than Sir *Harry*'s Addreſſes.

Vio. As I know you a Prude, I don't wonder at your Diſſimulation. What your Tongue declares, your Looks deny. You can't hide your Satiſfaction.

Mel. You injure me, Siſter; I wiſh'd him yours, and adviſ'd his addreſſing you.

Vio. Adviſ'd his addreſſing me! You think then I would take up with your off Caſts! I would as ſoon wear your old Cloaths. No, Madam; pride yourſelf in the Fop, and ſwell with the glory of having inſpired Love in a Creature too mean for the leaſt Regard from a Woman of my Merit.

Enter Belleſleur.

Bel. Pray, who has the Honour of being the Subject of your Reſentment?

Vio. You; your Wife; and that Self-Admirer, Sir *Harry*. Addreſs me to pique my Siſter! The Thought is exquiſite. But, without Vanity, Siſter, I believe the whole World would give me the Preference, except a Fool or a Philoſopher.

Bel.

Bel. You ſtudy to be diſobliging to me. Is *Meliſſa* criminal, becauſe thoſe who have ſeen you dare think her agreeable?

Mel. Can you tax me, Siſter, with any Deſign to attract Admirers, or of giving the leaſt Encouragement? Shall I, to pleaſe you, own my ſelf frightful? That my Features give Horror? Acknowledge you without Blemiſh in your Perſon, and without Fault in your Conduct. I am ready to do it.

Vio. The World would allow that Acknowledgement. But I don't want your weak Recommendation. My Senſe and Form ſpeak much better to all, who have Ears and Eyes. Sir *Harry* affronted me, and I will have Satisfaction.

Bel. After what Manner?

Vio. I'll let him know, he has the Honour throughly to diſpleaſe me.

Bel. The Sincerity of the Declaration [*laughing*] will greatly affect him.

Vio. That if he addreſs'd me to mortify my Siſter, I receiv'd him only to have the Pleaſure of ſhewing how much I deſpiſe him.

Bel. Excellent!

Vio. That my Siſter has him in Deriſion.

Bel. Good!

Vio. That ſhe is your Wife, Sir.

Bel. Your groundleſs Paſſion ought not to do a real Injury. I have my Reaſons for keeping my Marriage ſtill a Secret; and I could wiſh Sir *Harry* the laſt Man acquainted with it.

Vio. The Inſtant he knows it, he will proclaim it, and you will be laugh'd at. A mighty Injury!

Bel. Moderate your Paſſion, Sir *Harry* comes this Way.

Vio. My Anger redoubles at the Sight of the Traytor, my Tongue revolts, and ———

Bel. All's over; — I ſee my Hour is come.

Enter

Enter Sir Harry.

Sir Har. A very pretty Groupe of Figures! By your Countenances, I find I have made a very unſeaſonable Viſit. The more attentively I conſider you all, the more Emotion I cauſe. *Meliſſa* throws her Eyes to the Ground, and ſeems to have loſt the Uſe of her Tongue; *Violetta* arms her Eyes againſt me, which ſparkle with Indignation; *Pinwel*, playing with her Apron-ſtrings, puts on a Sneer of Importance, and *Belfleur* ſeems in a Conſternation! A mighty pretty Converſation-piece! Every one of theſe Attitudes are juſt, touching, and energetic.

Pin. We are all ſo well drawn, we only want Words.

Sir Har. To put an End to this ſilent Entertainment, Madam, [*to* Meliſſa] I beg you'll excuſe my Preſumption in troubling you ſo long with my fruitleſs Paſſion; I am ſenſible of my Folly, and approve the Return you have made to it.

Bel. He has diſcover'd me. [*Aſide.*]

Mel. If I am no longer the Object of your Deſires, I have my Wiſh; if my Siſter's ſuperior Merit has recover'd you to Reaſon, you can tell me nothing more agreeable. [*Exit.*

Vio. I would not have you flatter your Vanity, in believing me capable of accepting my Siſter's Refuſals. My Taſte is altogether as delicate as hers. I ſet as juſt a Value upon my own Merit, and can as ſoon diſcern and deſpiſe a Self-Admirer. You underſtand me, Sir *Harry*. [*Exit.*

Sir Har. How the Tyrant exults! Here's a Bonefire before a Victory. But I ſhall leave her to the Pleaſure of reflecting on the Pain ſhe gives

me, 'till my Marriage, elſewhere, ſhews how little her Anger can affect me.

Bel. Marriage! Sir *Harry*; Are you ſerious?

Sir Har. Very ſerious, my Dear. For I have an Order to wait upon an old Gentleman. —— But no Matter —— I know I ſhall be laugh'd at, and lampoon'd as a Diſciple of yours; but to take off the Edge of the Satyr, I will proclaim my Deſign, and write an Ironical congratulatory Poem to my ſelf. Look ye, I have already begun it. I intend to inſert your Works in Epitome, and ſhew all the many Ills you have ſet before our Eyes, to give the greater Triumph to Beauty; for I own I have not your Fortitude, nor, indeed, do I want it, as I am but an humble Follower of yours, who are the great Maſter of the Sect.

Bel. It's a bold Attempt, Sir *Harry*.

Sir Har. I am but a *Puiſné* Sinner againſt the Fair; I may recant with ſome ſort of Grace, but were you to fall into the like Weakneſs——

Bel. I muſt expect no Quarter. But who is the Lady has had the Power to make you forget *Meliſſa*.

Sir Har. Pho, *Meliſſa!* I think no more of her; I am ſatisfy'd ſhe has been married ſome Time.

Bel. Married! You jeſt ſurely.

Sir Har. I am very ſerious. She is married; and, by the Deſcription of her Husband, you may poſſibly know the Man. — They ſay he has Wit, but wants Senſe; that he is a Philoſopher, but led aſtray by his Paſſion. That notwithſtanding all his ſatyrical Reflections upon Matrimony, he has run his Neck into the Nooſe, is aſham'd to own a Wife, in whom any other would glory; and is more in Awe of Ridicule, than afraid of loſing an Eſtate. In a Word, the Man

is

is very wiſe and very ſilly. Do you know any ſuch Perſon?

Bel. I can gueſs, I believe, pretty near at the Man.

Sir Har. I am glad on't. If you have a Friendſhip for this Husband, adviſe him to ſtand collected, that he may with a better Grace meet the Storm which is gathering o'er his Head. Tell him, he muſt ſtand the Butt of each Pretender to Wit; that the News of his turning Renegade has already caus'd a great Effuſion of Ink, and Waſte of Paper; that his own Works will be quoted againſt him. Tell him, that *Overton* is preparing a wooden Cut of his Face, to adorn the Head of a new Ballad, with a printed Detail of his Character, entitled; *The fallen Philoſopher: Or, The Petticoat Triumphant.* You ſay you gueſs at the Man. Ha, ha. [*Exit.*

Bel. Am I awake! or do I dream! After ſuch a Thunder-ſtroke, what muſt become of me! 'Sdeath! I ſhall become the Scorn of Fools, and Jeſt of Ideots. The fatal Moment I have ſo long dreaded, at laſt has reach'd me. However, let me not forego my Reaſon in this Extremity. — I have but one Way to avoid this Tempeſt, and for that, Expedition is neceſſary.

'Twas I, my ſelf, provok'd this dreaded War,
Who, unexperienc'd, laſh'd the blameleſs Fair;
Spoke them a Curſe, ſent by the Wrath of Heaven,
Whom I have prov'd the greateſt Bleſſing given.
Woman's the Reliſh to embitter'd Life,
And Man's but half himſelf without the Wife.

Enter Bruſh.

This Mr. *Odway* ſeems to me the Bane of Society. He never enters the Houſe, but Noiſe and Diſſentions drive all Quiet and Good-humour out of it. Why there is not in the Family one reaſonable Creature but my ſelf, and 'tis with much ado I keep my Senſes. Well, Heaven diſpoſe of this Uncle, and reſtore us Peace. But here comes *Pinwell*, and crying too, if I am not miſtaken.

Enter Pinwell.

Why rowl thoſe Pearls all down thy roſy Cheek?
Thou can'ſt not grieve, but my fond Heart muſt break.

Pin. Laud, you would not think me in a Humour to ſupport your Impertinencies, did you know how I have been abus'd by that old, ugly, angry, noiſy Uncle of my Maſter's.

Bru. Abus'd, Mrs. *Pinwell!*

Pin. Ay, moſt wickedly, Mr. *Bruſh.* He met me, as he left my Maſter's Father, and after a hundred impertinent Queſtions, call'd me the filthieſt Name; and ſaid, he would ſoon rid the Houſe of us all.

Bru. Filthy Name!

Pin. Ay, Would you believe it? He call'd me —— I'm aſham'd to ſpeak.

Bru. Well, turn your Head on one Side.

Pin. He call'd me Second-hand Pin-cuſhion.

Bru. Second-hand Pin-Cuſhion! Is it poſſible! But no Matter. If he has loſt his Senſes, we muſt not loſe our Reaſon; and to be affected with his Paſſions, would be a Spice of Madneſs. I was juſt thinking that you and I are the only Two rational Creatures in this Family,

Family, and 'tis pity we ſhould be longer Two. Oh *Pinwell! Pinwell!*

Pin. Whatever Liberties my Lady may take, I think Mrs. *Pinwel* would be no leſſening of *Bruſh.* I deſire you would treat me with leſs Familiarity; it does not become you, I'll aſſure you. The World muſt think I have given ſtrange Encouragements, when you treat me with ſuch indecent Freedoms.

Bru. My *Venus!* You are always in my Thoughts. But when I mention you, to give you the Title of Miſtreſs, would be degrading her who reigns ſole Lady of my Heart. Mrs. *Pinwell* is like my fair One dreſs'd, naked *Pinwell*, gives an Idea which warms the Imagination.

Pin. You are always idle and impertinent in your Diſcourſe; too free and encroaching in your Behaviour, and ſo intollerable in the Declarations of your Paſſion, that I think my ſelf happy in every Opportunity given me of avoiding you.

Bru. That's the Reaſon you follow me.

Pin. I follow you!

Bru. Pray who was here firſt? Since you give your ſelf theſe Airs, know, Mrs. *Pinwell*, that I am ——

Pin. What are you, Mr. *Bruſh?* [*Surpriz'd, kindly.*

Bru. One of that Sex which is born to Command; that I am conſcious of my own ſuperior Merit, and will be no longer a Slave to the capricious Humours of weak Woman. —— I am, Mrs. *Pinwell*, a Man — a Man, Mrs. *Pinwell*, and will keep up to the Dignity of my Sex.

Pin. Laud, Mr. *Bruſh*, did I ever give the leaſt Hint of your not being One. No, I am ſure I ever fear'd your being too much a Man; I fear'd your being falſe, deluding, and practiſing on the fond Weakneſs of believing eaſy Woman. [*Crying.*]

And I now ſee thoſe Fears were but too well grounded. Cruel, inſulting *Bruſh!*

Bru. Look ye, Mrs. *Pinwell,* Time was that warm Shower would have melted the Fool *Bruſh,* the Slave *Bruſh*; but *Bruſh,* who has recover'd his Senſes, and broke his Chain, is not to be cajol'd; is not to be wheedled into Slavery. Not but if you would act leſs like a Woman, and more like a reaſonable Creature, I may, perhaps, take Compaſſion on you.

Pin. I will, indeed; I will, Mr. *Bruſh.* [*Sobbing.*

Bru. We are then Friends; you are again the Princeſs of my Affections, and I once more ſubmit to your Dominion, 'till the *Domine* ſhall have given me Authority to reign.

Pin. And that he never ſhall. I am glad I know your tyrannic Temper. I find how you would inſult in Power. This neceſſary Diſſimulation of mine, has ſhown you in your true Colours. I might otherwiſe, perhaps, have taken Compaſſion on you, Ha, Ha — poor Lord-like Man! How like that fierce Animal a Sheep you look now! Ba— Why don't you ſtrut, Conſcious of ſuperior Merit? Why don't you keep up to the Dignity of your Sex? Boaſt your Liberty, and threaten me with Chains? Ha, ha, ha.

Go mighty Monarch! boaſt deſpotick Sway,
As the wiſe Means to make the Fair obey. *Exit.*

Bru. Well, the Devil's in her, that's all. — I am an Aſs, and ſo is every one who is in Purſuit of Woman. Egad, the Sex has uſurp'd our Prerogative. Superior Judgment in Man is of as little Uſe to him, where a Woman's in the Caſe, as ſuperior

perior Strength in Beaſts, when we employ our Wiles.

Reaſon in Man o'er brutiſh Force prevails,
But when the Fair attack, our Reaſon fails.

[*Exit.*

ACT V.

Enter Bellefleur *follow'd by* Horatio.

HOR.

GIVE me at leaſt a Hearing.

Bell. 'Tis to no Purpoſe. My Reſolution's fix'd, and nothing ſhall diſuade me; for I'll leave the Town this Inſtant.

Hor. This Weakneſs is moſt ſurprizing. What will the World ſay of you?

Bell. Whatever they pleaſe, ſo it does not reach my Ears.

Hor. To how little purpoſe, my Friend, have you read and admir'd the Virtues of the Antients, when you are ſo terrify'd at the thoughts of the trifling Satyr of Jejune Wits; and abandon your Reaſon when there is moſt need of its Aſſiſtance.

Bell. I agree that the Sages of Antiquity were govern'd by Virtue only; nothing cou'd ſhake the Firmneſs of their Minds. I admire their Example but I want their Courage.

Hor. Aſſume but your Reaſon, and you may equal them.

Bell. O *Horatio*, I wou'd you were one Moment in my ſituation, the Butt of a thouſand Affronts. Scarcely is my Marriage known, but whole Vollies of Sarcaſms, in Proſe and Verſe, are diſcharg'd upon me, Read theſe. [*Gives Papers.*

[*Hor. reads.*]

The Verdict on the Married Fool ſhould be,
Like the ſelf-murtherers brought in Lunacy.
Woman's at beſt a neceſſary Evil,
Proud when a Miſtreſs, when a Wife——a Devil.

And can ſuch Partridge flights affect you?

Bell. To me they are mortal Wounds, I ſhall be laugh'd, pointed at, and become the publick Jeſt!——But an obſcure retreat ſhall ſcreen me from their Fury.

Hor. And how will you diſpoſe of *Meliſſa*?

Bell. She ſoon ſhall follow me.

Hor. Believe me, ſhe'll oppoſe this Deſign.

Bell. Spight of herſelf ſhe muſt conſent; as my Misfortunes are owing to the imprudence of her Tongue, ſhe muſt bear her part. I'll immediately acquaint her with my deſign, and then take Horſe. Who waits there?

Enter Bruſh.

See if your Lady is return'd?

Bru. Lady, Sir!

Bel. Ay, Sir, my Wife. Are you the only one ignorant of my Marriage? [*Bruſh Stares.*

Bru. Sir!

Bell. Why does the Fellow loyter? Tell *Meliſſa* I would ſpeak to her.

Bru. Yes, Sir.

Hor.

Hor. Ah poor unhappy Lady; how ſenſibly do I feel the Anguiſh, this ſeparation will cauſe thee.

Bel. I muſt requeſt, *Horatio*, that you will this Inſtant to my Father, acquaint him with my deſign, beg his Conſent, and deſire he will let my Uncle know my Marriage; endeavour to pacify him, and in my abſence protect my Wife. I ſhall wait your return with Impatience.

Hor. I ſhall be expeditious. [*Exit.*

Enter Meliſſa.

Mel. The trouble I read in your Looks, make me impatient to enquire the Cauſe, tho' I apprehend your Anſwer.

Bell. Your indiſcretion has been too great, to leave room to doubt the Cauſe of my uneaſineſs.

Mel. This Coldneſs, this unuſual Coldneſs, will ſoon eaſe you of the unhappy cauſe of your Diſquiet; if it is your wretched but your fond *Meliſſa.*

Bell. Madam, you may now live without Reſtraint: Thanks to your indefatigable care, our Marriage is no longer a ſecret, and you are eas'd of a Burthen too inſupportable for your Sex.

Mel. Do not wrong me, Sir—If I have made it publick, may the greateſt Misfortune fall upon me, your Neglect.

Bell. Oh, I am ſatisfy'd, I ought to tax my Indiſcretion only.

Mel. I could wiſh any Misfortune, but the not being yours may happen to me, rather than ſee your Uneaſineſs. Tell me, Sir, why was I ſent for hither?

Bell.

Bell. Know then—I am reſolv'd this Inſtant to leave the Town; and ſent for you to inform you of this Reſolution, and to take my leave.

Mel. Then fortune has done her worſt. If you fly me, ſhe can have no other Ills in Store, and I ſhall be inſenſible to every other Stroke ſhe levels at me.

Bell. Be calm. When I have fix'd upon the Place of my Retreat, I'll leave it to your Choice either to follow me, or continue in Town.

Mel. Still you are unkind. This ſeparation will be worſe than Death—I renounce the Town, the World, all the falſe Pleaſures it affords: Let me not ſee you chang'd.

Enter Horatio.

Hor. Belleſleur, I acquainted your Father with your requeſt, which he imparted to your Uncle, with that Prudence, and in thoſe Terms which the nicety of the affair requir'd. But ſure never Man flew into ſuch a tranſport of Rage. I left 'em together, and haſten'd hither, to prevent your being ſurpriz'd.

Bel. Could my Father gain nothing on him?

Hor. Reaſoning with him, was throwing Oyl to quench a Fire. Your Father prevented his coming hither, by ſaying you was not at home. I perceive he is acquainted with his Temper, and is willing he ſhould diſcharge his firſt Rage before he ſaw you.

Mel. And can my *Belleſleur* think of leaving me ſingly to withſtand this Storm, which he, almoſt dreads to Face? Will he expoſe me to this brutal Paſſion? Or can he imagine his Fortitude is leſs than mine? O my *Belleſleur*, think to what

what I am expos'd, if you withdraw your ſhelter, under which, I fear no Ills of Life.

Bell. Meliſſa, thy reproach is juſt; thy Fears have baniſh'd mine; to aſſure thy quiet, there is no danger, I would not meet with Pleaſure—— I now deſpiſe that toothleſs ridicule I ſo much fear'd; can calmly bear the Sallies of my Uncle's Rage, and let him know I think thou'rt cheaply purchas'd at his whole Eſtate.

Mel. Now you are indeed my Husband! Oh, expect not a return for this endearing Tenderneſs; I can never make you any, till my Power is equal to my Heart.

Enter Violetta.

Vio. The hideous Wretch! The unlick'd Bear!

Hor. On whom are you laviſhing theſe Compliments Madam.

Vio. On that filthy Creature *Belleſleur*'s Uncle. The foul-mouth Ruſtic is below in the Parlour with your Father, and ſo loud, that I heard him very liberal in his Appellations, into the back Cloſet.——Why, he ſwears he will have a Divorce *Meliſſa*. I found by the old Fellow's Reſponſes, that your Father is endeavouring to get the better of his Rage.

Bell. What can we do in this critical Juncture?

Hor. Let not the Violence of your Uncle's Paſſion overcome your Reaſon.

Bell. That my Gratitude as well as Duty will prevent——But I will avoid him, 'till his firſt Sally is paſt. Come *Meliſſa*, I'll wait on you to your Apartment. I would not yet have you meet this angry Gentleman.

[*Exit.*

Vio:

Vio. I am concern'd at their ſituation, and ſpight of my ſelf can't help pitying them.

Hor. Does your good-nature ſurprize you?

Vio. Why not? Do you conſider the Injury my Siſter has done me?

Hor. What Injury!

Vio. Such as our Sex can never forgive. She has appear'd agreeable, even to the Perſon I like.

Hor. You make me an obliging Compliment. But 'tis time, *Violetta*, to reward my Services; lay aſide the Coquet, and break thro' that Cloud of Vanity, which obſcures a fine underſtanding. I can now appear myſelf, and would have you do ſo too.

Vio. I really don't underſtand you. Do you take me for an Impoſtor?

Hor. Indeed I do. I am ſatisfied all theſe little Airs are aſſum'd, as you think 'em ſo many Lures for Admirers. Examine your Conduct, I deſire no other Judge than your own good ſenſe. I have long ſuffer'd by your Caprice, yet your Eyes, in contradiction to your Words, declare me not indifferent to you.

Vio. And have you really the vanity to think ſo? Nay, ſhould what you ſurmiſe be true, how imprudent would you think me, ſhould I conſent to a Man, whoſe Birth and Fortunes I am a ſtranger to?

Hor. May then the Lord *Freeborn* hope a confeſſion from you, which he could not obtain under the borrowed Name of *Horatio!*

Vio. Lord *Freeborn!*

Hor. Belleſleur will anſwer both for my Quality and Fortune.

Vio. Why have you conceal'd yourſelf?

Hor.

Hor. You ſhall know hereafter. Let me now purſue my happineſs, and——

Vio. When we have ſeen my Siſter's affairs happily concluded, 'twill be time to think of our own. In the mean while, I promiſe to be wholly governed by the advice of *Belleſleur.*

Hor. You then aſſure my happineſs.

Odw. within.] Blood and Thunder, none of your pacific Arguments. I will not be pacify'd—and

Enter Odway *and old* Belleſleur.

Odw. I tell you once more, you are an unreaſonable old Fellow, to mention Reaſon to me, when that Hang-dog your Son has dar'd feloniouſly to diſpoſe of himſelf contrary to my legal authority, as his unkle and foſter-father. Sbud, I'll diſinherit the Dog; I'll firſt cut his Throat, and then cut him off with a Shilling.

Old Bell. Brother, I beſeech you to moderate your Paſſion. The Character of the Lady he has marry'd is ſo amiable, that I flatter myſelf you will be reconcil'd, and forgive.

Odw. No, I will not forgive him any thing, but his taking a Doſe of Ratsbane, or be reconcil'd with any thing but his Ruin. The Dog ſhall ſtarve, loſe his reputation to get bread, and die in a ditch for want of it. But, if I am not miſtaken, yonder's the Bane of our Family. Madam, I ſuppoſe you are ſhe, whoſe Beauty has prov'd too hard for my Nephew's Philoſophy; has made an Aſs of a man of Senſe, and bewitch'd him to prefer a mere Gugaw to a fine Eſtate.

Vio. I deſire, old Gentleman, if you require an Anſwer, you would ſpeak to be underſtood.

Odw.

Odw. 'Sbud, with what an Air of Diſdain the Gipſey ſpeaks. To ſpeak plain, Madam, I take you for the Lady to whom my Nephew is married.

Vio. I hope, Sir, you have nothing to object to our Family: It is as antient and unſullied, to ſay no more, as that of your Nephew; And the World, which judges without Paſſion or Prejudice, tho' I fear you do not, will think our alliance rather an Honour than a Diſgrace.

Odw. 'Sbud, Madam, I am not talking of your Family. I have known ſome who could quarter ſixteen Coats of Arms, could not purchaſe a Quarter of Mutton. By whoſe conſent was this Marriage concluded, Ha! By whoſe conſent, I ſay?

Vio. By the mutual conſent of both Parties, or it had hardly been a Match.

Odw. Was his Father here, or I conſulted?

Vio. It was not thought neceſſary.

Odw. Did ever Man hear ſuch a Gipſey! — Is this the Lady of ſo amiable a Character [*to Old Bell.*] Let me tell you, Madam———

Vio. advancing. And let me tell you, Sir, that we are not a Family to bear Inſults, or to ſuffer the ill-manners of a little Gentleman Grazier.— Uſe your Nephew as you pleaſe; if he is mean enough to put up your Affronts, I am not, and I will be treated with reſpect due to my birth. Your being *Belleſleur*'s Unkle, ſhall give you no privilege to treat me with an indecent Freedom.

Odw. 'Sbud, a very Termagant, a She *Bajazet* [*to Old Bell.*] Here's a Philoſopher for you! Here's a Man of Prudence! — A Dog — had he marry'd a dumb Beggar, I could have forgiven him! But here's a Tongue as loud as a Point of War, as nimble

nimble as an alarm, and as reſtleſs as the Knocker of a poor Lord's Door.

Old Bell. Madam, I think a milder Treatment of my Brother would much better have anſwer'd the character my Son gave you.

Odw. To make few Words, ſince that Scoundrel, my Nephew, has ſuch a——— 'Sbud, I can ſcarce contain [*aſide*] fine Lady of a Wife, I'll diſinherit him this minute, and to vex the Dog, hang myſelf the next.

Hor. Hear me, Sir, you miſtake——

Odw. Sbud, Sir, 'tis no miſtake. Sure I've the the liberty of a free-born *Engliſhman*, and can diſpoſe of my Eſtate and Perſon, how, when and where I pleaſe.

Hor. Sir, this Lady———

Odw. Shall never have a Groat of mine.

Hor. I find, Sir, you won't be ſet right.

Odw. Sbud, 'tis very ſtrange: Every body takes upon him to ſet me right; to tutor me, to direct and order my Affairs. But look ye, here comes our *Solon*.

Enter Bellefleur.

How like a Dog you look now!—Haſt thou not a moſt brazen front, to dare to look me in the face, Ha!

Bell. Sir, I am conſcious of nothing ought to make me avoid your ſight.

Odw. Poor innocent! what, you are not marry'd, Ha!

Bel. Sir, that I am marry'd———

Odw. I know, Sir, that you are a very ſad Dog for ſo being: I know too, that I will never give you a Groat, you ſhall know.

[Hor.

Hor. *entertains* Viol. *in dumb ſhew.*

Bel. Being unacquainted with that mildneſs, that ſweetneſs of Temper, which engaged me to ——

Odw. O lud, O lud Brother! Sweetneſs of Temper! — Why ſhe's a Tygreſs, a Lioneſs of the Woods, a ſhe Bear, and a Fury in Petticoats.

Bel. O Sir, you muſt miſtake her.

Odw. 'Sbud, Sir, why don't you tell me I lye? But ſince I am not to be believ'd, ask your Father.

O. B. Indeed, Son, ſhe has behaved, with regard to your Uncle, very imprudently, and with too much Warmth.

Bel. Believe me, Sir, 'tis impoſſible: She is gentle as Pity itſelf.

Odw. Gentle as a Cato'mountain! — She inherit a Groat of mine! No, I'd ſooner build an Hoſpital, tho' I were to make Intereſt to get into it myſelf.

Bel. You are Maſter of your Eſtate, to diſpoſe of it as you think fit. I can eaſily bear the loſs of what I never coveted: Witneſs Heaven, I wiſh your Life long and happy; but to be depriv'd of your Affection, I own that loſs afflicts me, and I cannot ſupport your Anger. To your Care I owe my Education; nor can I reflect upon the fondneſs you ſhew'd in my tender Years, without grieving you ſhould think I have made an ungrateful Return to ſo much Goodneſs.

Odw. If that *Jezabel* were not in ſight, the Scoundrel wou'd get the better of me, and I ſhould not be able to cut his Throat.

Bel.

Bel. If ever the Innocence of my infant State obtain'd your Pity, if the Obedience of my riper Years engag'd your Paternal Tenderneſs, and that filial Reſpect I have ever paid you, merited your Regard, let me not forfeit your good Opinion: Forgive this Fault, and bleſs with a paternal Affection that dear Woman who has bleſs'd your once lov'd Nephew. Oh! did you ſee her Beauty, did you know her Modeſty, were you acquainted with her Sweetneſs of Temper, you would not only pardon my Diſobedience, but applaud my Choice.

Odw. The Rogue had almoſt melted me; but, thank my Stars, the Mention of that Termagant has reſtored me to my Reſentment. [*aſide*] S'bud, Sir, your Wife's a Whirlwind: Sweetneſs of Temper! Why, an Earthquake is not more violent.

O. B. After my having been Witneſs to the Treatment ſhe gave your Uncle, I can ſay nothing in her Favour.

Vio. I muſt puniſh that old Uncle for his Brutality. — Gentlemen, there needs not ſo much Ceremony, Mr. *Odway* has been treated as he deſerves.

Odw. D'ye hear, Sir, do you hear your Dove!

Bel. Your Miſtake perplexes me. — Allow me to fetch her hither, and you'll be convinc'd that ——

Odw. Ay, 'tis ſo: This Devil of a Woman has not only robb'd me of my Nephew, but my Nephew of himſelf. Quite delirious!

Enter *Meliſſa.*

Bel. Behold, where ſhe comes, the Pride of Nature, and Glory of her Sex. View that Face, Sir; obſerve the Sweetneſs of thoſe Looks, and own you have wrong'd the beſt, the tendereſt Wife, the moſt humane ——

Odw. Hold, hold, is this thy Wife.

Bel. — She is, Sir, ſhe knows from me your innate Worth, knows the Obligations which I owe you, and, with a dutiful Reſpect, comes to join in acknowledging a Debt we ne'er can hope to pay.

O. B. Daughter, I wiſh you Joy, and hope my Brother will give it you, by his Approbation of your Marriage. Had not your Int'reſt kept me conſtantly about him, you would have received my Bleſſing ſooner. May you be truly happy.

Mel. My Duty, Sir, ſhall ſpeak my Thanks. — Is not that Gentleman my *Bellefleur*'s Uncle?

O. B. He is, Madam.

Mel. To you, Sir, I muſt now ſue for Pardon. That good, that tender Parent can forgive our Fault. O may the ſame Compaſſion warm your Breaſt, and bid us both be happy!

Odw. Lookee, Madam, I am quite out of the Queſtion: You did not think my Conſent neceſſary, and I don't think my Approbation convenient. If his Tenderneſs for you equals his Gratitude to me, you have an excellent Bargain of him: Make much of him.

Mel. Sir, I dare not vindicate your Nephew or myſelf; but as I am the unhappy Cauſe of your Diſpleaſure, your Anger juſtly ought to fall on me.

Odw. I am a meer Cypher, a Country Put, What ſignifies my Diſpleaſure? It will not looſe the Knot, or make you leſs his Wife.

Mel. Alas, Sir, I ſee I am his Ruin, and hardly dare to call myſelf his Wife, ſince my being ſo I find his only Crime: How ſhall I look upon my *Bellefleur*, when I reflect his fatal Love for me robb'd him of you, the Protector of his Infancy, and Guardian of his Youth. Puniſh our Fault, but leave me ſome ſhare of his Affections, by not entirely withdrawing yours.

O. B.

O. B. Brother, here's a happy Miſtake.

Odw. S'bud, I ſhall be talk'd out of my Reſentment, and then I ſhall have no body to be angry with. How vexatious this is! [*aſide.*

Mel. Alas, I ſee my Miſery decreed. This Tempeſt of your Soul too plainly ſpeaks my Fate, and tells me I am loſt for ever. I dare not meet the Fury of your Eyes, and yet my trembling Tongue entreats for Pardon. O Sir! reflect my only Fault is loving him, who once was dear to you.

Odw. S'bud, nothing cou'd be more diſappointing. Had he married that Tatoo, how juſtly could I have ſtorm'd: I would ſoon have ſpoil'd all her Airs; I would have cut her Husband's Throat before her Face, broke all her China, and ſettle my Eſtate on the *Charitable Corporation.*

Mel. Let, Sir, the Loſs of that Eſtate be thought ſufficient Puniſhment, for his only Fault. We ask no more than the Continuance of a Parent's Love.

Enter Sir *Harry.*

Sir *H.* Ha! I came to wiſh and receive Joy, but think your Countenances ſpeak nothing leſs.

Odw. Hey day, who have we got here!

Sir *H.* I ſuppoſe, *Belleſleur*, the Diſcovery of your Marriage has caus'd ſome Uneaſineſs; but *Meliſſa*'s Character will ſoon reconcile your Family. I heartily wiſh you Joy. [*To Odway*] Sir, by the Deſcription given me, I take you for Mr. *Odway.*

Odw. Well, Sir, and what then?

Sir *H.* Sir, as you deſign'd your Daughter-in-law for your Nephew, which you ſee is impracticable, if you will give your Conſent, I ſhall be proud of your Alliance.

Odw. I find, Sir, you'll loſe nothing for want of asking: But wou'd it not be proper for me, Sir, to know who you are?

Sir *H.* This Letter from my Uncle Sir *Peeviſh Teſty* will inform you.

Odw. What, my Neighbour Sir *Peeviſh Teſty*, of *Northumberland!*

Sir *H.* The ſame, Sir.

Odw. Your Name is then ——

Sir *H. Sprightly*, as this Letter will inform you.

Odw. S'bud, this happens to my Wiſh. Now ſhall I be reveng'd on my graceleſs Nephew, and baulk his Expectations, who would have baulk'd my Girl's. Sir *Harry*, without more Words, I agree to your Uncle's Propoſals: My Girl's Fortune is conſiderable; to which you ſhall receive with her the Addition of my Eſtate.

Sir *H.* Your Pardon, Sir, that laſt Article I muſt object to, or forgo the Happineſs I promiſe myſelf with your Daughter.

Odw. How's this, Sir! What, do you ſlight the voluntary Offer of three Thouſand Pounds a Year. S'bud, here's another Fool enough to make a Philoſopher.

Sir *H.* Were I born without a Fortune, and had not the Proſpect of any, I would not purchaſe my own Happineſs by the Ruin of my Friend's. Come, Sir, let the Excellency of your Nephew's Choice plead his Pardon, and to crown their Happineſs, beſtow that Eſtate you ever deſign'd him.

Bel. Too generous Friend! [*Embracing.*

O. B. This is truly great.

Hor. Take Pity on the Lady, Sir, — Her Family is noble, her Fortune not deſpicable, and her Mind is ſuited to the Beauty of her Form.

O. B. Come, Brother, I ſee Pity ſtruggling with Reſentment. Cheriſh the God-like Paſſion: Brutes can revenge, but only Man forgive: Mercy is the darling Attribute of Heaven, and he who ſhews it moſt, approaches neareſt to Divinity.

Mel.

Mel. And muſt I, Sir, be the unhappy Cauſe of ſuch a Parent's Loſs?

Odw. No, I can hold no longer; — I am a Milk-Sop, and there's no more to be ſaid. I am a pitiful Coxcomb, a forgiving old Fool; but I can't help it. Come Neice, wipe your Eyes, give me a Kiſs. — So, bleſs you both; may you be happy together. If you will, let the old Puppy board with you, my Eſtate ſhall go in common while I live, and be your own when the Fool's ſolder'd up.

Bel. This unbounded Generoſity can only be acknowledg'd by our future Actions, which ſhall ſpeak our Gratitude and Duty, and I ſhall be ever ſenſible of the vaſt Debt I owe you.

Sir *H. Bellefleur*, I heartily rejoice at your good Fortune, and I wiſh you, Madam, Happineſs equal to your Merit.

Mel. This particular Inſtance of your Friendſhip, Sir *Harry*, aſſures me you mean no Complement.

Hor. Dear *Bellefleur*, I heartily congratulate you on this happy Turn of Affairs.

Vio. Nor muſt I omit too paying you my Compliments. — And of you, Sir, give me leave to ask Pardon for the ill Manners I have been guilty of; I find I was miſtaken in the Perſon; I thought you intractable, and as ſuch treated you with Diſdain: I am now convinc'd you are juſt and humane; and ſhall hereafter ſhew you the utmoſt Reſpect and Honour.

Odw. Now this Baggage talks ſo reaſonably, I can't help being Friends with her too. Why here's no living with theſe People. 'Tis impoſſible to be angry with any of the Family. —— Well, Madam, we are Friends.

Hor. Since your Siſter's Affairs are ſo joyfully ended, I hope, Madam, you'll contribute to the Happi-

Happineſs of this Day, by making good your Promiſe. I have your Honour engag'd for your following *Bellefleur*'s Advice.

Viol. My Lord, your Merit will prevail above all Engagements; and here I give myſelf to his diſpoſal.

Bel. And I with Pleaſure, give you to his Lordſhip. — I wiſh you both Joy. — Sir, be pleas'd to know Lord *Freeborn*.

Odw. S'bud, my Lord, I knew your Father well; and I wiſh you Joy.

Hor. Sir, I thank you, and ſhall be proud of the Honour of ſucceeding to my Father's Place in the Liſt of your Friends.

Odw. Why I heard, my Lord, that having the Misfortune to kill a Friend in a Duel, you had left *England*.

Hor. So indeed, I caus'd it to be given out, that I might with the greater Security remain conceal'd. But I have received certain Advice of his Recovery, and now appear again as myſelf.

Odw. Well then, ſince all things are to my Wiſh, my Daughter diſpos'd of, and my Nephew married agreeable to his Inclinations, I will, for the future, lay aſide all Care; be it yours, Brother, to ſee proper Settlements got ready for the making good my Promiſe.

Bel To you, *Meliſſa*, I owe my Converſion and Happineſs.

Tho' our firſt Parent reign'd Deſpotick Lord,
Poſſeſs'd of all that Nature could afford;
His Bliſs was not compleat, he farther ſought,
And ſigh'd for ſomething more, but knew not what;
Till Heav'n indulgent gave the tender Wife,
And lovely Woman crown'd the Joys of Life.

FINIS.

EPILOGUE,

Spoken by Mrs. *YOUNGER.*

LADIES, we've treated you with what is common,
A Man of Learning prov'd too weak for Woman.
Reaſon was long oppos'd to Female Charms,
But that and Books, were poor defenſive Arms:
The Art of Reas'ning ſtrikes at Nature's Laws,
And Nature always glows in Beauty's Cauſe:
Her dazzling Splendor, deep Impreſſions leave,
Awakes the Dull, and animates the Brave:
In us aſſerts her Rights, defies the Schools,
And, by Experience, proves all Reas'ners Fools.
In Beauty's Cauſe the Coward deſperate fights;
When Beauty warms, the raviſh'd Poet writes.
The ſordid Miſer, wretched to himſelf,
When charm'd with Beauty, laviſhes his Pelf.
Prieſts, who to Heaven the ſacred Path can ſhew,
Subdu'd by Beauty, oft that Path forgo,
And gladly own a Heaven is found below.
Beware, ye Wits, nor dare our Charms provoke,
When Men of Senſe ſubmit to Beauty's Yoke:
Make no Pretenſions to ſuperior Pow'r;
The haughtieſt of you all we ſoon can low'r.

We've

EPILOGUE.

We've ſet this Night a Sage before your Eyes,
Like him, renounce your Errors, and be wiſe:
An inward Rev'rence for the lovely Fair
Breathes in his Vows; and ſanctifies his Air.
No looſe Deſires his warmeſt Wiſh imparts,
But the pure Pleaſures of united Hearts:
By Beauty, taught ſlow Reaſon to remove,
His manly Paſſions 'waken into Love.